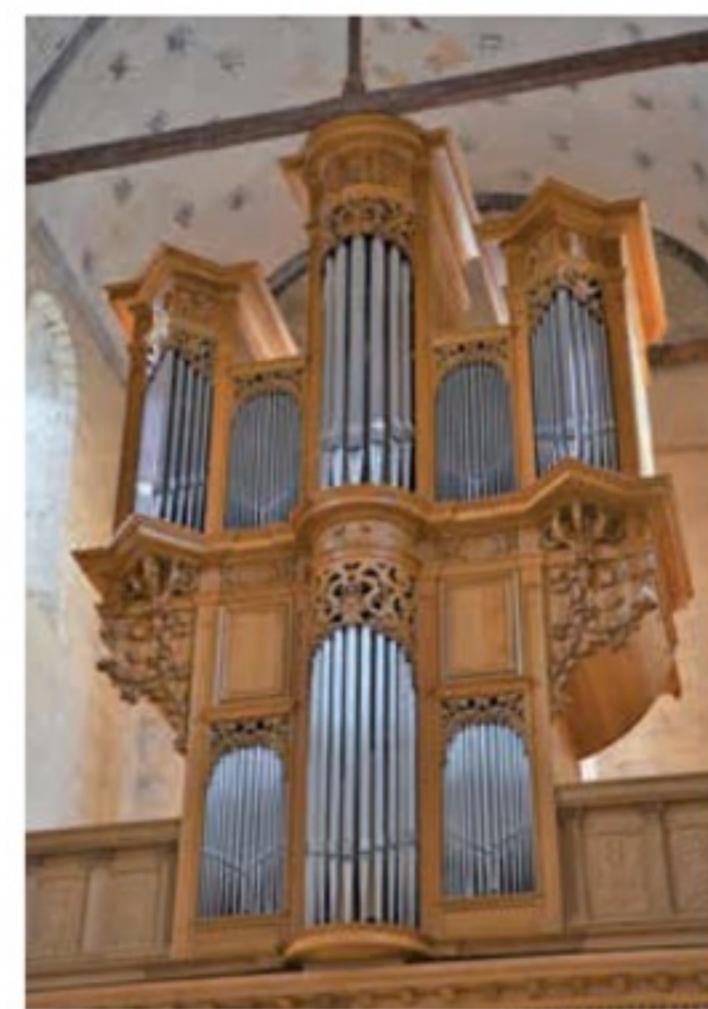


CHOIR & ORGAN

July/August 2019

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BERTRAND CATTIAUX
Renaissance and
baroque: the
historical core
of two organ
projects

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SIR JAMES MACMILLAN

The leading Scottish composer shares
personal reflections on life and the arts

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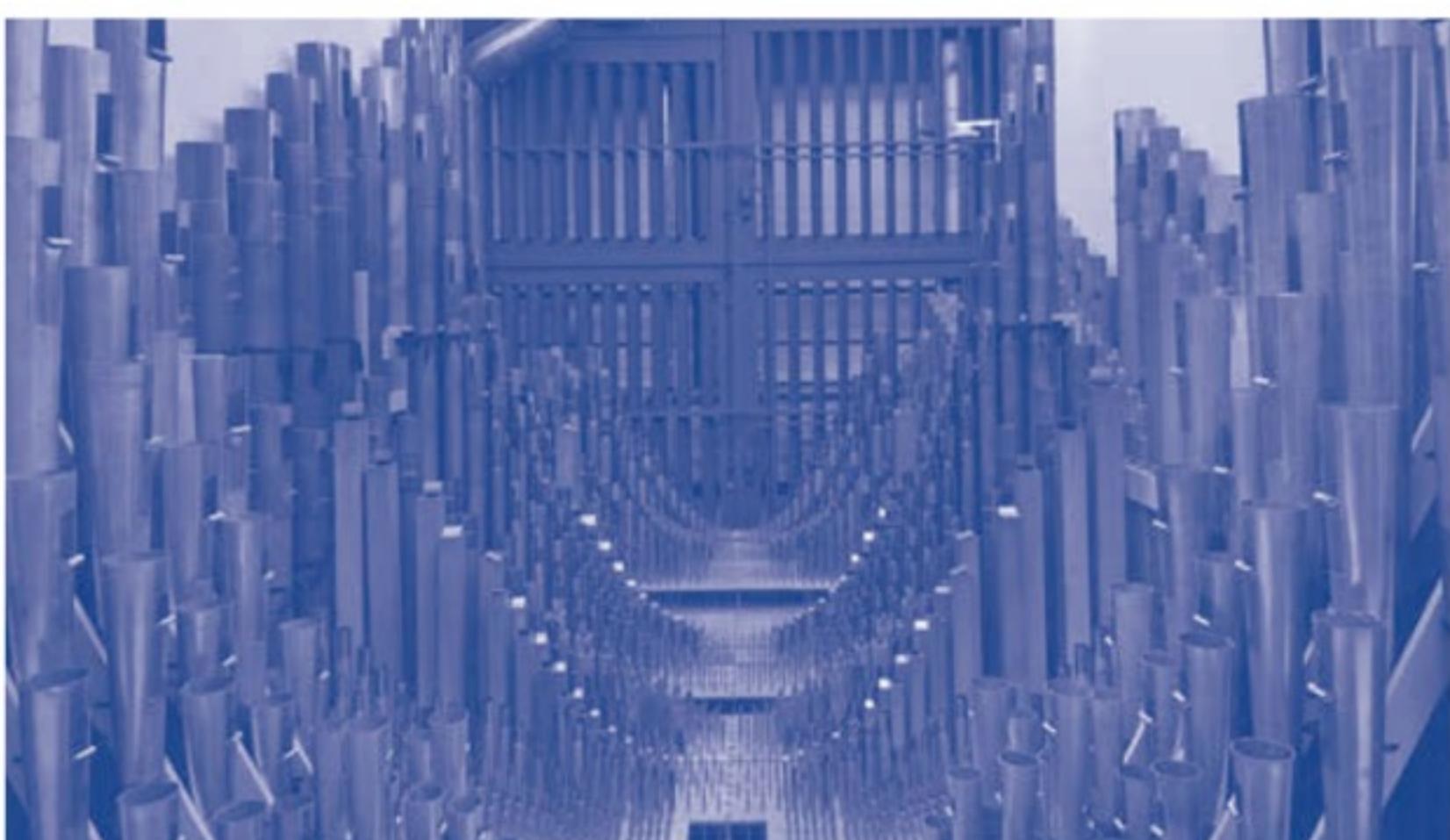
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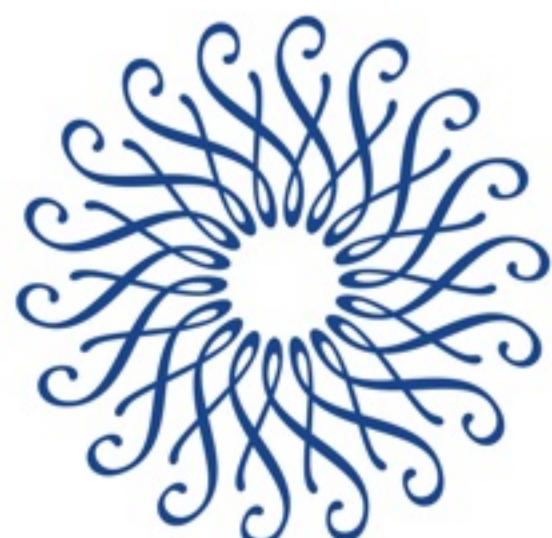
SOLO AND TUTTI
Meet the Norwegian Soloists' Choir

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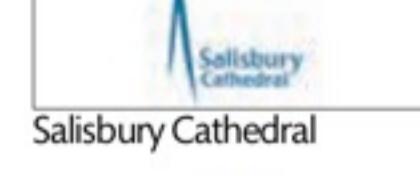
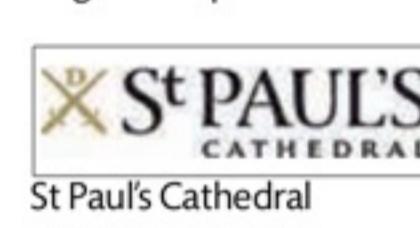
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EDITOR'S LETTER

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DAMAGE LIMITATION



The decision to change the boarding arrangements at Westminster Cathedral Choir School (WCCS) (see News, p.7) is short-sighted at the very least. Sending boys home every weekend instead of having full boarding immediately limits the catchment area for choristers from national (even international) locations to commuting distance to London; it has already resulted in three boys from Wales leaving the choir. For the choristers, it disrupts the rhythm of rehearsing and performing - anyone who is a professional musician knows that regular practice is required to improve, let alone

retain standards. And for the congregation of Westminster Cathedral, it deprives them of the opportunity to hear the boys singing plainchant at the large Masses on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings, which for many is balm for the soul after the stresses of a working week.

But apart from the musical concerns is the matter of process. Choristers' parents were sent a general short survey in January - which, according to received information, was not about the boarding arrangements - and then came the announcement on 28 March of the changes to come. That there was no consultation with the Cathedral's music department is egregious; the announcement came as a fait accompli. Given that the WCCS's aims include 'To support a world-class choir for Westminster Cathedral', it seems inconceivable that such a decision could be made without discussion with the very people who know most about what is needed precisely to support that world-class choir.

This total lack of respect for individuals who will be affected by major decisions is lamentable. The decision at Westminster Cathedral Choir School is a poor one, and has been badly handled. It not only threatens the high quality of music at the Cathedral, it has also broken trust between the school, the parents, and the Cathedral's music department. The changes are due to take effect from September; it is not too late for the school to rethink its position.

MAGGIE HAMILTON, EDITOR

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Printed by
Pensord, Tram Road, Pontllanfraith, Blackwood NP12 2YA
Customer services, subscriptions & back issues
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Website www.choirandorgan.com
Telephone calls may be monitored for training purposes.

Choir & Organ, ISSN 0968-7262, (USPS 7314) is published bi-monthly by MA Music, Leisure & Travel Ltd, St Judes Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB, United Kingdom. The US annual subscription price is \$84.99. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named WN Shipping USA, 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Jamaica NY 11431. US Postmaster: Send address changes to Choir & Organ, WN Shipping USA, 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Subscription records are maintained at MA Music, Leisure & Travel Ltd, Unit A, Buildings 1-5 Dinton Business Park, Catherine Ford Road, Dinton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 5HZ Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent

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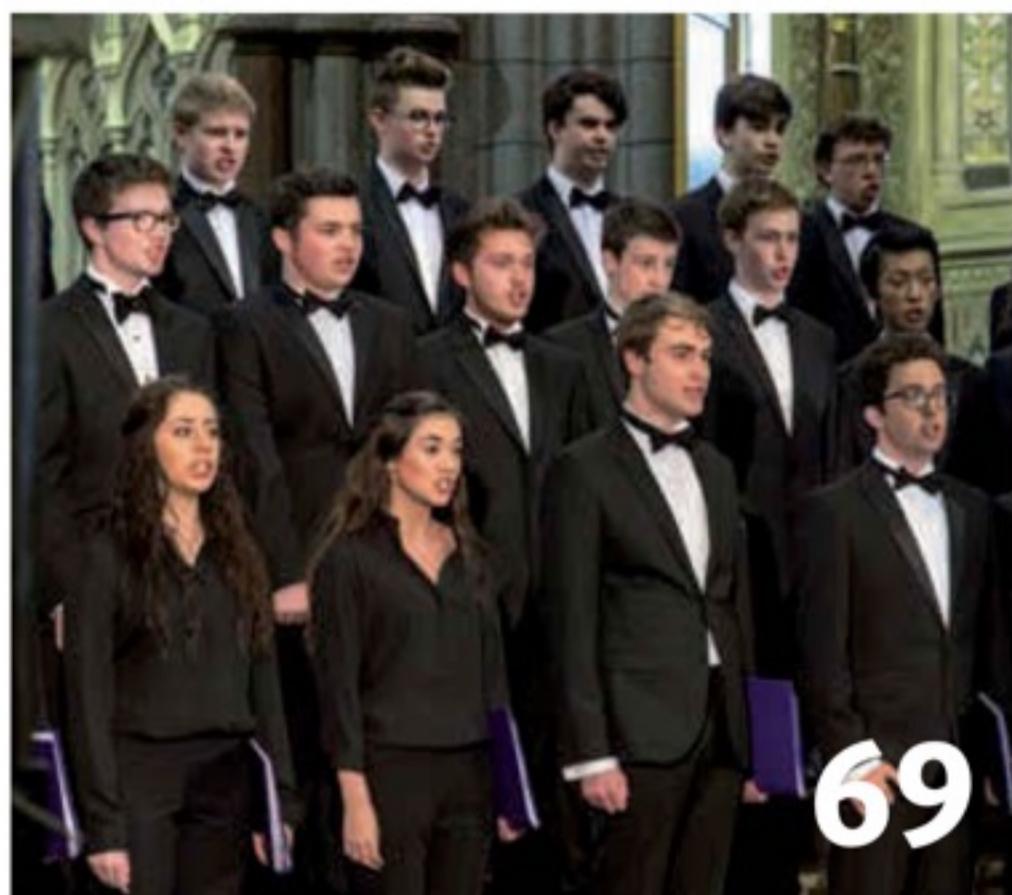
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September 2019

**Notre-Dame
Cathedral, Paris**
April 2020

*COMPETITION WINNERS

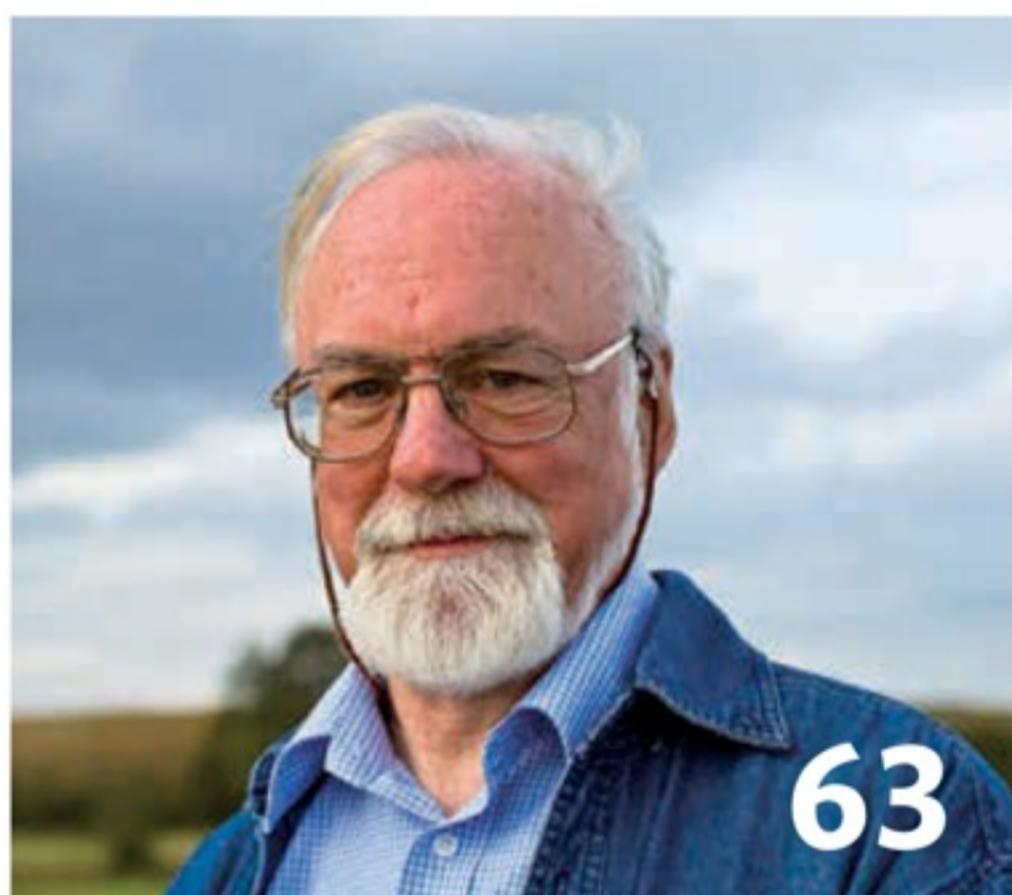
*Aaron Tan — AGO National Young Artist Competition in Organ Performance

**Alcee Chriss — Canadian International Organ Competition



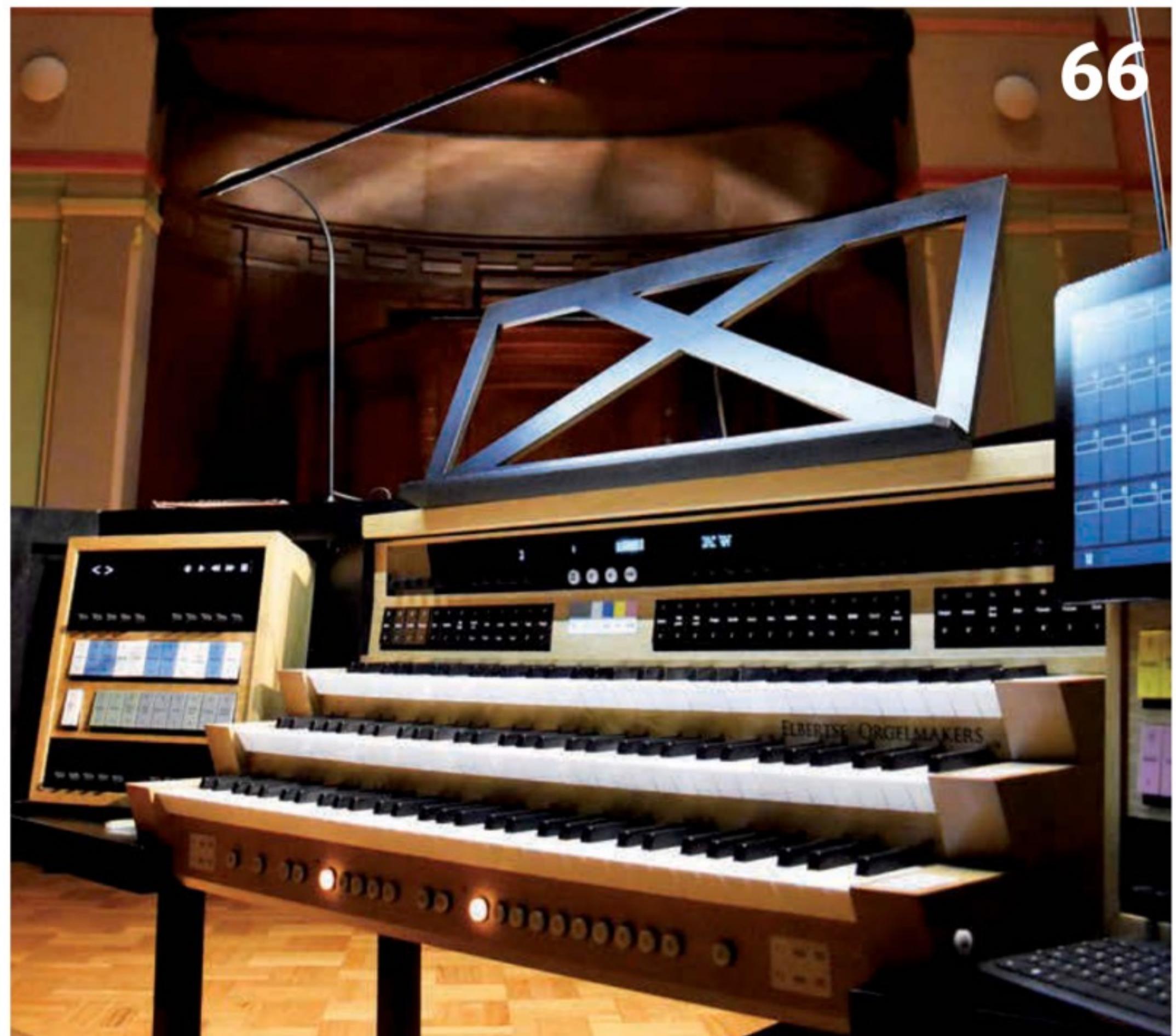
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'At my current stage, the need for silence has become a thing'

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NOTRE-DAME ORGAN SAVED



▲ Tested by fire: Notre-Dame in flames

THE FIRE AT NOTRE-DAME CATHEDRAL, PARIS, which broke out on 15 April, has left the famous Cavaillé-Coll organ relatively unscathed, writes *Pierre Dubois*.

It took more than 400 firemen to put out the fire. Although the fire claimed the building's iconic spire, built by Violet-Leduc in 1859, the firemen were able to preserve the main structure of the cathedral and the bell towers, ensuring the organ's survival. Protected as it is by a platform above the case, the instrument escaped being flooded. The II/30 chancel organ, built by Boisseau in 1968, was more intensively flooded, but the pipework in the higher level of the instrument is reported to have been relatively spared.

During the fire, intense smoke filled the main organ with ashes and lead-laden dust. However, after visiting the instrument, organ advisers Eric Brottier and Christian Lutz, and organ builder Pascal Quoirin, reported that in spite of the heat in the building during

the fire, the pipework had not melted, so the historical heart of the organ was preserved. The new console is unusable and will need to be rebuilt, as its electric and electronic system is now entirely out of service. Organ builder Bertrand Cattiaux, who visited the instrument in May, commented that it is still unknown what corrosive effect the greasy dust might have; he felt it crucial, therefore, for the pipework to be dismantled and cleaned without delay (the case will remain in place).

Almost immediately after the fire, donations started to arrive towards the restoration of the cathedral and its organs, including from the record label Harmonia mundi, which has announced that all profits from the sale of its CD *Musique pour Notre-Dame de Paris* [including Machaut's *Messe de Notre Dame*; HMX 2901590] will go to the Fondation du Patrimoine towards rebuilding the cathedral.

One of the most famous organs in the world, the Grand-Orgue of Notre-Dame is the summation of several centuries of organ-building history and is one of the most prestigious organs in the world. Some of its pipes date back to the 15th century. Over the course of time it grew in size, as builder after builder added more stops and more pipes to what his predecessors had contributed. François Thierry entirely redesigned the organ in the 'classical' style in 1733. The organ was then altered by François-Henri Clicquot in 1783; it avoided destruction during the French Revolution, thanks to the efforts of its then organist, Claude Balbastre. In 1868 it was entirely reconstructed in a more modern style by Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, who worked on it again in 1894. While Cavaillé-Coll suppressed the distinct *positif* case and installed a new separate console facing the nave, he was clever enough to retain the best stops of his predecessors, in particular the brilliant 18th-century classical reeds. Further interventions in the 20th century were by Herman in 1959, and then Robert Boisseau and, later, his son Jean-Loup, in the 1960s and 70s; Boisseau, Cattiaux, Emeriau, Giroud and Synaptel in 1992; and as recently as 2014, Cattiaux and Quoirin made the last alterations and improvements. The particularity of this unique instrument, with its five manuals, 130 stops, 144 ranks and over 8,000 pipes, is that various layers of its long history have been preserved and superposed upon one another and, as Vincent Dubois (one of its *titulaires*) says: 'The synthesis of all that work is just a miracle.'

Anna Lapwood, director of music at Pembroke College, Cambridge, opened the British Academy of Film and Television Awards at the console of the Royal Festival Hall in London. She was playing in an arrangement of a song by the pop band London Grammar with Gareth Malone and the children from KAA School, the school next to Grenfell Tower, Kensington, where a fire in 2017 caused the deaths of 72 people. Talking about the BAFTAs, Lapwood told C&O: 'It was a rather surreal experience. It was a brilliant opportunity to help raise the profile of the organ and show just how versatile an instrument it can be. Even better than the performance itself, though, is that as a direct result of seeing the organ at the start of the show, I've had seven new children wanting to start lessons. The future is bright!'



WARREN GUNN

CHANGING GEAR

COURTESY WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL



▲ Martin Baker directs the Choir of Westminster Cathedral in concert

CHANGES AT WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL CHOIR SCHOOL (WCCS) are set to have a major impact on the lives of the Cathedral's choristers.

On 28 March David Heminway, chair of the board of governors, announced that the school would no longer board pupils throughout the week: from September 2019, the boys will be sent home on Fridays after school, the choristers returning on Sunday mornings in time to rehearse and sing the 10.30am Mass. This means that they will no longer sing the 5.30pm Mass on Fridays or the 10.30am Mass on Saturdays, reducing the total number of services they sing from seven to five per week.

After the plans were announced, parents wrote to the school's president, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, to express their concerns, but to no avail.

The new structures will enforce a limited reach of choristers, who will need to be drawn from those within weekly commuting distance of London, rather than nationally as at present. As WCCS is the only residential Catholic cathedral choir school in the UK, this will deny many Catholic boys the opportunity to sing in a cathedral choir. Writing in the *Catholic Herald*, composer Colin Mawby – a former WCCS pupil and later Master of the Music at Westminster Cathedral – said these new arrangements would have excluded him as a pupil, as well as his former Cathedral assistant David Bevan, and international organ recitalist Nicolas Kynaston, and continued, 'Many ex-choristers take their experiences back to

their parishes: this will be much reduced. The new timetable will not only affect the Cathedral but also our national liturgical life.'

Concerns have been raised that the decision to implement the changes was made without consultation with the Cathedral's music department. Music professionals have commented that maintaining the high standards that the current choir has reached requires regularity of rehearsal and singing services – any reduction will threaten the quality of singing. Further, if the men of the choir perceive a lowering of standards, they might also be tempted to leave for other choirs.

In a statement, Heminway said: 'These modest changes are designed to make the life-changing opportunities for choristers at WCCS more attractive to modern parents, who wish to spend time with their children at the weekends, and for whom 24/7 boarding is no longer an appealing option. They are also designed to strengthen and support the brilliant work of Westminster Cathedral Choir.'

Westminster Cathedral Choir is one of the world's leading Catholic choirs. In addition to singing at services, with a unique repertoire ranging from Gregorian chant to music of the present day, the choir performs in concerts and tours, and has won critical acclaim for their many recordings. *Westminster Cathedral Choir School is a boarding and day preparatory school in Victoria, London. It was founded in 1902, and teaches around 150 boys, including Westminster Cathedral's 20 choristers.*

IN BRIEF

Six new choral works commissioned by the chamber choir Sonoro can now be heard on Spotify. The pieces – by Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Russell Hepplewhite, Joanna Marsh, James McCarthy, Will Todd and Janet Wheeler – are part of the choir's **Choral Inspirations** project for 2019. Sonoro, directed by Neil Ferris, are running a series of workshops and concerts from Jun to Oct 2019 in Cardiff, Birmingham, Newcastle and London. Details at sonoromusic.com.

£83,000 has been given from the proceeds of Patrick Hawes's **The Great War Symphony** towards SSAFA's (the Armed Forces Charity) Norton House, Stanford Hall, Leicestershire, which supports the families of those receiving treatment for injuries at the nearby Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre.

The **National Youth Choirs of Great Britain** (NYCGB) and Making Music have formed a new partnership. Seven former members of the NYCGB Fellowship Programme have been included in the Making Music Selected Artists Guide. makingmusic.org.uk/saguide2019

The record distributor **[PIAS]** has announced a global distribution deal with Berliner Philharmoniker Recordings. This complements partnerships with in-house labels, including the London Symphony Orchestra and the Choir of King's College, Cambridge.

Cork International Choral Festival has announced its programme for 2020. Founded in 1954, the Festival presents events and performances centred around Cork's City Hall. Choirs from across the world gather for a programme of Gala concerts, schools concerts, national and international competitions, and world-class performances. The 2020 event runs from 29 Apr-3 May; details and syllabuses at corkchoral.ie.

NEWS & PREVIEWS

FORTHCOMING EVENTS



Emerging/Progressive Conducting Courses

20 Jul, 7 Sep, 12 & 13 Oct, Pimlico, London

A joint course, for those with experience in singing and/or conducting to develop existing skills, and for those who work with at least one choir on a regular basis and wish to further develop their technique. Observer places available.

abcd Festival Conducting Courses

21-22 Aug, Royal Birmingham

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Leading from the front

For anyone starting out in leading singing or with limited experience, particularly in schools and community choirs.

Advanced choral leadership

for anyone conducting their own choir to a high standard.

abcd Choral Leaders' Festival (34th Annual Convention)

22-25 Aug, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

An expanded Convention, with full days of international repertoire and for community choirs. Choirs include the National Youth Choir of Hungary and the Town Hall Gospel Choir; with John Rutter, Paul Spicer, Peter Broadbent and Astrid Vang-Pedersen.

Young Conductors' Course

22-25 Aug, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

For anyone aged 18-25, running in parallel with the Festival; group tuition on basic choir training and conducting. Bursaries available. With Lucy Griffiths.

Further info and online booking at
www.abcd.org.uk/events/abcd-events.

MUSICAL FAREWELL



▲ Peter Wright with Maggie Danby

ON 23 MAY, SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL WAS FULL to hear the outgoing recital by organist and director of music Peter Wright.

Wright is retiring after 30 years in the post. His recital of music by Bach, Franck, Reger, Vierne and Guillou, performed on the Cathedral's 1897 T.C. Lewis organ, comprised the annual recital of the Nicholas Danby Trust, of which Wright is a trustee; the Trust also hosted a reception afterwards in the retrochoir, which dates back to c.1212.

Tributes were paid to Wright's personal and professional qualities by Maggie Danby and Dame Gillian Weir, the latter having taught Wright. She said, 'My own memories of Peter at Cambridge are

not only my admiration of his superb playing, but my recognition of what a very special person this was. Right through his hugely impressive subsequent career he has proved this by gathering an ever-increasing host of admirers, not only of his music-making but of his personality.... whether caring for a nervous choirboy, giving time and encouragement to young players, quietly helping out a friend, or taking on tricky roles on a bigger stage.' Remembering a period when Wright was president of the Royal College of Organists, she praised the 'great tact and skill' with which he sorted problems, 'restoring stability and paving the way for still further progress.'

Wright retires from Southwark Cathedral in August 2019.

The Nicholas Danby Trust was founded in 1997 in memory of the distinguished international recitalist and leading conservatoire teacher. Continuing the efforts of Danby to promote international and cultural exchange, the Trust grants a major European scholarship – the Nicholas Danby Scholarship of £6,000 per annum – for a postgraduate organ student to undertake conservatoire study outside their home tradition for up to two years. Bursaries of £3,000 per annum are also available for one-year foundation courses or undergraduate study in a country other than the student's own. www.danbytrust.org

APPOINTMENTS & AWARDS

Former King's Singer **Christopher Gabbitas** is to succeed Charles Bruffy as artistic director of the Phoenix Chorale. The initial contract is for five years, commencing with the 2019-20 season.

Welsh baritone **Jeremy Huw Williams** has been appointed president of the Incorporated Society of Musicians for 2019-20.

The Musicians' Company Cobbett Medal has been awarded to **John Gilhooly** OBE, artistic and executive director of Wigmore Hall and chairman of the Royal Philharmonic Society. The annual award recognises outstanding contributions to chamber music.

Hilary Punnett is to succeed Laurence Lyndon-Jones as assistant organist at Chelmsford Cathedral.

ORGANFEST GOES TO WALES

BOOKING IS OPEN FOR ORGANFEST 2019, which will take place in Cardiff from 6-8 September, writes Andrew McCrea. Venues include landmark churches, the National Museum and St David's Hall, and a gala concert by David Briggs in Llandaff Cathedral.

The biennial event is the responsibility of the British Institute of Organ Studies, the Incorporated Association of Organists and the Royal College of Organists. They will be working 'on the ground' with Cardiff Organ Events, which has promoted organs and organ music for many years. OrganFest 2019 is the fifth since the series began in 2014, specifically to promote collaboration in the sector and to nurture a deeper appreciation of organs and organ playing in the UK. The last festival, in 2017 in Hull (then UK City of Culture), attracted many delegates from far and wide.

Instruments used include two Father Willis organs in recitals by Gerard Brooks, RCO president 2019-21: the 1887 Willis at Eglwys Dewi Sant with a programme of Bach, Mendelssohn *et al* (6 Sep); and the 1894 instrument at the city's parish church, St John the Baptist, with works by Bach, Franck and Widor (7 Sep). The organ remained remarkably intact over a century and was restored by David Wells (with Peter Hindmarsh) in 2005.

David Pipe, director of the Organists' Training Programme in the Diocese of Leeds, a scheme with which the RCO has been collaborating, introduces the Peter Collins organ (1982) of St David's Hall in a family concert (7 Sep). He performs Bob Chilcott's *Mr Majeika and the Magic Organ* for narrator and organ, based on Humphrey Carpenter's popular children's story. This concert will also feature Jeremy Sampson and the WOOFYT (Wooden One-Octave Organ for Young Technologists), a fun, informative experience for children which introduces them to the principles of the organ.

The Llandaff Cathedral gala by David Briggs (7 Sep) explores the recently installed Nicholson & Co. organ, considered the largest British cathedral organ to be built by a British builder in more than 50 years; the programme – which will be recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3 – will include a large-scale symphonic improvisation on Welsh melodies.

▼ The 1774 Snetzler organ in the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff



AMGUEDDFA CYMRU - NATIONAL MUSEUM WALES

Organ music and talks at the National Museum round off the Cardiff proceedings. Robert Court (Cardiff University Organist) and Andrew Renton (the Museum's Keeper of Art) illustrate the history of Snetzler's 1774 organ for Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, then one of the wealthiest men in Britain who employed Robert Adam to design the case. Later rebuilt, this instrument was relocated from Wynnstay Hall in 1995 and restored by Goetze & Gwynn. Andrew Renton discusses some of the other exhibits in this remarkable gallery. *Booking information can be found at bit.ly/2Ki3XyH. www.organfest.org.uk*

EVENTS

The **International Organ Course in Romainmôtier**, Switzerland, takes place in July. Wk.1 (14-21 Jul), led by Emmanuel Le Divellec and Tobias Willi, concentrates on improvisation at all levels. Wk.2 (21-28 Jul) is led by Andrés Cea Galán, Olivier Latry and Gerhard Gnann, who focus on the organ music of Jehain Alain and give masterclasses on (respectively) Spanish baroque music, 18th-century French music, and the music of Muffat and J.S. Bach. Organs used are the Alain family organ, built by Albert Alain, the house organ of Tagliavini, and the Lhôte organ in the abbey church. jehanalain.ch

Southbank Centre has joined forces with the PRS for Music Foundation for its **New Music Biennial**, a weekend comprising performances of 20 new works in all genres of contemporary music. Among them is Claire M. Singer's new organ work, *gleann ciùin* (5 Jul - see p.26). Dominic Ellis-Peckham leads Voice:Mash'd, a vocal workshop for all ages and abilities, exploring new music as the creation of improvisation and creative compositional play (7 Jul). And *She Who*, created by BAFTA Award-winning composer Jessica Curry for the National Youth Choir, is a celebration of the powerful collective voice of women and youth (7 Jul). bit.ly/317OmaW

St Laurence, Ludlow is hosting an Organ Day on 20 Jul, with talks on the church's Snetzler organ (Andrew Body), and the Wetheringsett organ – a reconstructed Tudor instrument – currently housed in the church (Dominic Gwynn), and an opportunity to play them. The event also includes a historic tour of the church, and an organ recital given by Peter Dyke, assistant director of music at Hereford Cathedral. Cost: £25 (incl. lunch). The event will be repeated on 12 Oct, when the recital will be given by Roger Judd. Contact and bookings at 01584 875438, tours@stlaurences.org.uk.

New Music for St Paul's

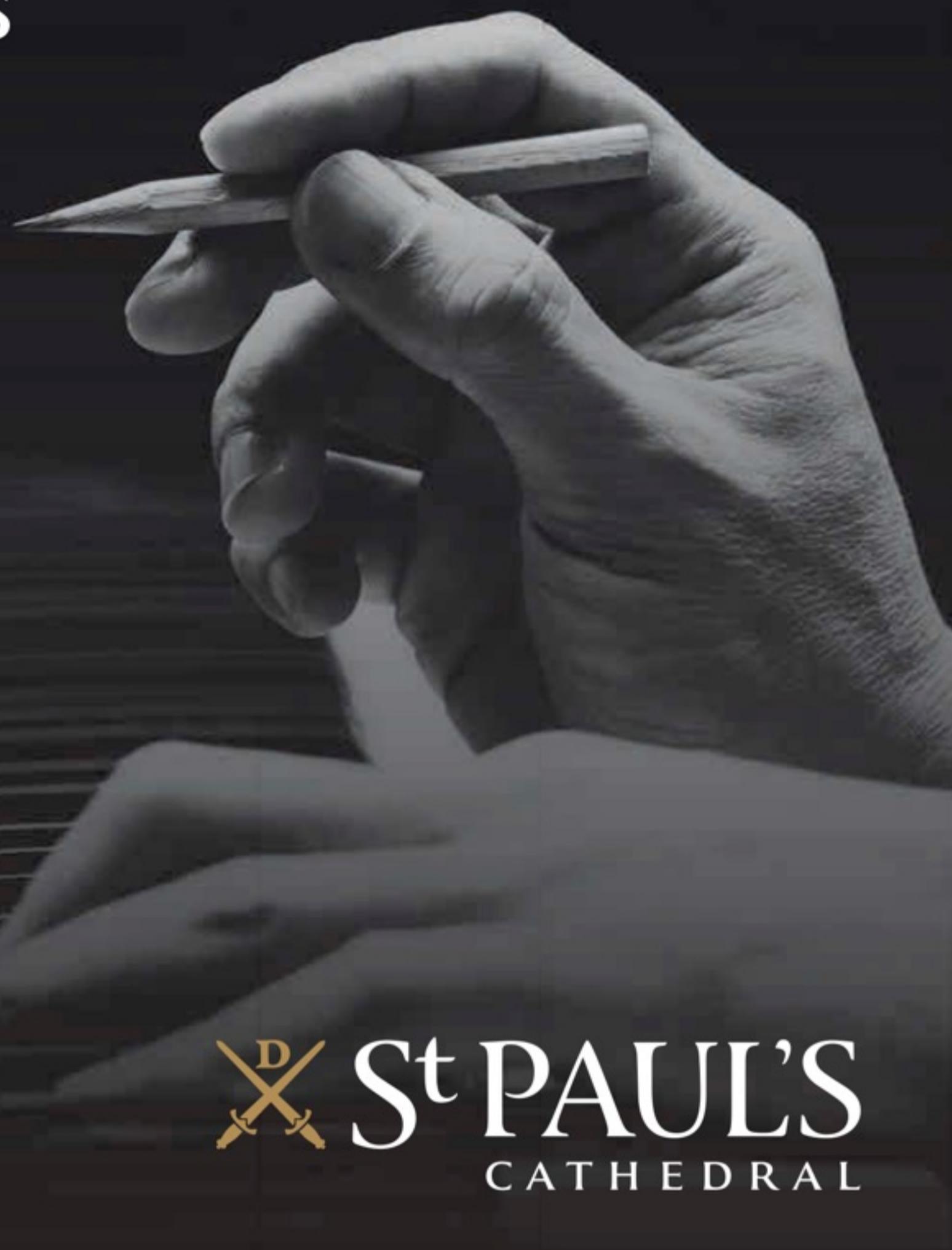
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NEWS & PREVIEWS

MACMILLAN IN EDINBURGH



SIMON JAY PRICE

▲ Genesis Sixteen are among the performers for the premiere of MacMillan's Symphony no.5 at the Edinburgh International Festival

THE SIXTEEN'S YOUTH CHOIR, GENESIS SIXTEEN, joins forces with their parent group and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra for the world premiere on 17 August of Sir James MacMillan's Symphony no.5, 'Le grand inconnu' at this year's Edinburgh International Festival (see feature, p.28, and Readers' offers, p.33). Billed as 'a meditation on the mystery of the Holy Spirit', MacMillan told *C&O* that the new symphony would have movements dealing with 'breath, water and fire'.

'I have a kind of ideal listener in mind when I write music – one who is as curious as I am about music and as curious about making encounters in music that they haven't made before. The Edinburgh Festival certainly has those listeners – the communication can be really wonderful.'

'It's a world I love – getting the music to work, to have its own consistency, meaning and message, and being able to communicate it through the musicians to the audience. It's a three-way process which is mystical and magical. Music is more important now than ever – it's a language which speaks beyond words and images; that's why it's so mysterious and

strangely beautiful, and still has so much potential – the possibilities are endless and it's a great gift.'

The work was commissioned by the Genesis Foundation, the UK's largest commissioner of sacred choral music which was founded and is chaired by John Studzinski. The Foundation has commissioned a number of works from MacMillan, including his *Stabat Mater*, which gained worldwide attention as the first-ever concert to be live streamed from the Sistine Chapel, and *O Virgo Prudentissima*, based on a tiny fragment from the Eton Choirbook by Robert Wylkynson, which received its world premiere in Eton College Chapel alongside other commissions and works from the Eton Choirbook itself.

► At 5pm on 17 August, again in the Usher Hall, *C&O*'s organ music editor Stephen Farr will serve up MacMillan's *A Scotch Bestiary* for organ and orchestra as the appetiser to a performance of the composer's virtuosic concerto for orchestra, *Woman of the Apocalypse*. The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra is conducted by Joana Carneiro. eif.co.uk

EVENTS

Observer places are still available for **St Andrews Organ Week** (27 Jul-3 Aug). With guest speakers Christophe Mantoux and Aude Heurtematte, the course focuses on French music from the classical period to the present day, alongside works by J.S. Bach. Full details at bit.ly/31fkWru

Hereford diocese celebrates the work of organists in the diocese and promotes the work of its organists' training scheme in '**Organists for the Future**', on Tuesday 2 Jul in the evening at Leominster Priory.

On Bastille Day, 14 Jul, St Michael's Framlingham hosts **Vive la France** – Revolutionary Music and Songs, for voice and organ, from 2-6pm. Info and tickets from Malcolm Blakeney 01728 648571

US musician **Chris Rupp** visits the UK to hold a workshop on songwriting and a cappella arranging (19 Oct, London); he is also available from 15-18 Oct for school workshops in a variety of genres, including a cappella hymns and gospel songs. thephoenixcollective.co.uk

Dartington International Summer School and Festival runs from 27 Jul-24 Aug. Highlights include: wk.1 A Venetian Vespers (Big Choir) and Sing Tallis with Stile Antico; wk.2 Handel's *Saul* (Big Choir); wk.3 Britten's *Saint Nicolas* (Big Choir) and *Flower Songs* (Chamber Choir); and wk.4 Gospel music with Carol Pemberton and Celia Wickham-Anderson of Black Voices; and the world premiere of a work by Eleanor Alberga (Big Choir). dartington.org

Choral music is included for the first time at **Music at Paxton**, in the Scottish borders. John Casken conducts the Coquetdale Chamber Choir in music by Elgar, Grainger, Holst, Barber, Finzi, Cooke, Lander, MacMillan and Maxwell Davies (2.30pm, 21 Jul). musicatpaxton.co.uk

FESTIVAL FLOURISH

THIS YEAR'S CHELTENHAM MUSIC FESTIVAL (5-14 July) has a major focus on women composers and performers.

Works programmed include Kaija Saariaho's *Nuits Adieux* and Karin Rehnqvist's *I Himmelen* ('In heaven's hall'); the introit at Festal Evensong (5 Jul, Cheltenham College Chapel) is Hannah Kendall's *Their Kingdom, the Air*, and the anthem is 'Deus Meus' from Roxanna Panufnik's *Westminster Mass*. Suzi Digby's ORA Singers make their Festival debut in two concerts. The first, inspired by Rome's rich catalogue of renaissance composers, includes Cheryl Frances Hoad's *Gaude et Laetare*, Julia Adolphe's *Pater Noster* and the premiere of Freya Waley-Cohen's *Reflection on Christus Factus Est* (10 Jul). Their second programme celebrates the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, presenting madrigals alongside works by more modern composers who have set Shakespeare and other Elizabethan texts, including Libby Larson's *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day*, Cecilia McDowall's *Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises*, and Judith Weir's *The Song Sung True* (11 Jul). cheltenhamfestivals.com

The baroque collective Solomon's Knot are artists-in-residence at this year's **Ryedale Festival** in north Yorkshire. They present three Michaelmas cantatas and

▼ Plenty to sing about at the Three Choirs Festival



ASH MILLS

the Magnificat by J.S. Bach (23 Jul), and a Purcell Pageant – odes, welcome songs and masques (25 Jul); on 27 July they compare and contrast motets by J.S. Bach with those of his father's brother, Johann Christoph (27 Jul). Also at the Festival are Sarah Latto's Echo Choir, who take part in a 'triple' concert in various parts of Castle Howard, with a motet programme ranging from Purcell to Panufnik (12 Jul). They're joined by reader Roger McGough for a candle-lit concert of poetry and music on the theme of mortality, from Purcell's *Funeral Sentences* to iconic songs by The Smiths (17 Jul). ryedalefestival.com

Recitalists at the **Three Choirs Festival** (Gloucester, 26 Jul-3 Aug) include young organists selected by the Royal College of Organists: Steven McIntyre (27 Jul, Tewkesbury Abbey), Anita Datta (31 Jul, Cirencester Parish Church), and Christopher Strange (1 Aug, on the extensively refurbished Cheltenham College Chapel organ). John Scott-Whiteley's Celebrity Recital in Gloucester Cathedral (29 Jul – see Readers' Offers, p.33) features music by Tournemire, Bach, Judith Weir, Pierre Cochereau's Symphonie in B flat minor and the premiere of a new Toccata by James MacMillan. As well as Cathedral services, the extensive choral programme includes

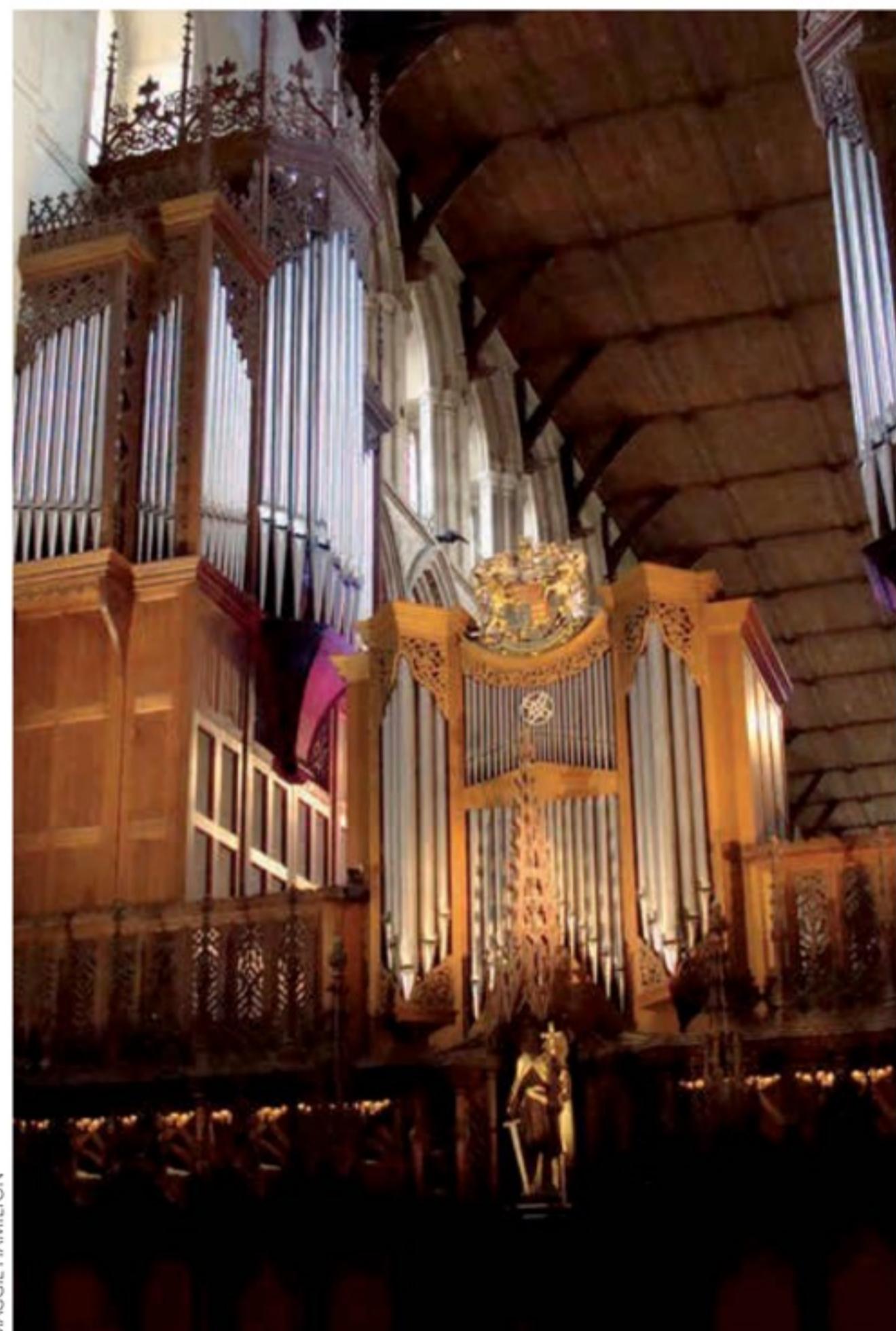
MacMillan's *Seven Last Words* (26 Jul), Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* (27 Jul), Verdi's Requiem (28 Jul), Rachmaninov's Vespers (29 Jul), Karl Jenkins's *The Armed Man* (30 Jul), John Joubert's *English Requiem* (30 Jul), Handel's *Israel in Egypt* (31 Jul), the premiere of Bob Chilcott's *Christmas Oratorio* (1 Aug) and Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony* (2 Aug). 3choirs.org

Westminster Abbey's five-manual Harrison & Harrison grand organ, installed for the coronation of King George VI in 1937, is the focus of the Abbey's annual

Summer Organ Festival. Isabelle Demers performs works by US composers Jason Roberts and Calvin Hampton alongside Bach, Alkan, Tournemire and Stravinsky (16 Jul). She is followed by the Abbey's organist and master of the choristers, James O'Donnell, who plays Vierne's 1902 Second Organ Symphony (23 Jul); assistant organist Matthew Jorysz performs music by Clérambault, Ravel and Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* (31 Jul); Franz Danksagmüller, Liszt, Saint-Saëns and Alain are on sub-organist Peter Holder's menu (6 Aug); and Michel Bouvard, titular organist of the Basilica of Saint-Sernin in Toulouse, performs Widor's monumental *Symphonie romane*, together with works by his grandfather, Jean Bouvard (13 Aug). westminster-abbey.org

Peter Holder also has first-night duties at the **BBC Proms**, performing the important organ part in Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* (19 Jul); and Notre-Dame's Olivier Latry returns to the Proms with a dance-influenced programme including Khachaturian's *Sabre Dance*, his own transcription of the Ritual Fire Dance from Falla's *El amor brujo*, and Lemare's of Saint-Saëns's *Danse macabre*. In the year of Jean Guillou's death, Latry will perform the latter's version of Liszt's *Prelude & Fugue on BACH* (4 Aug). Leipzig Gewandhaus organist Michael Schönheit provides the first-half warm-up for the orchestra's performance of Bruckner 8 under Andris Nelsons, with a Bach selection including the Fantasia in G minor, BWV 542 and the 'St Anne' Prelude & Fugue in E flat, BWV 522 (23 Aug). royalalberthall.com

SUMMER AT ST ALBANS



MAGGIE HAMILTON

▲ St Albans Cathedral's organ is at the centre of the Festival

through a rich banquet of instrumental and vocal concerts, the Fringe, and the art exhibition, organ recitals abound. The lunchtime Bach Corner recitalists are Callum Alger (11 Jul), Henry Websdale (12 Jul), Polina Sosnina (18 Jul), and Alexander Little (19 Jul), all at 1.15pm in the Cathedral. Members of the jury also give solo recitals: Christophe Mantoux (3.30pm, 13 Jul, St Peter's); Ken Cowan (3pm, 14 Jul, Cathedral); Thomas Trotter (1pm, 15 Jul, Christ Church Spitalfields, London); Hans-Ola Ericsson (6pm, 18 Jul, Cathedral); and Dong-Ill Shin (3.30pm, 20 Jul, St Peter's). Of the two remaining jury members, Franz Danksagmüller combines organ and electronics to provide a soundtrack to the German silent film *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (9.30pm, 17 Jul, Cathedral); and Maurizio Croci plays chamber organ and directs Italian early music ensemble Il Pegaso in music by Monteverdi and Frescobaldi (8pm, 14 Jul, St Saviour's).

St James' Baroque, directed by James O'Donnell, take over the orchestral duties in the Organ Competition's all-Handel Concerto Final (7.30pm, 19 Jul, Cathedral); and both Interpretation and Improvisation competitions conclude on 20 July (7pm, Cathedral).

'For over 50 years,' Titterington told C&O, 'the Competition has turned St Albans into a home-from-home for talented young organists, and for illustrious jury members, from all around the world. We make a point of celebrating the diversity of organ music across many generations, from the 16th century to 21st-century compositions and improvisations. But our 30th Festival also brings a broader spectrum of international artists than ever to this beautiful city, as we aim to place the organ within the widest creative context. The programmes which please me most are the ones which make connections across art-forms – such as the juxtaposition of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* with Beethoven's opus 132 string quartet, or showing a classic 99-year-old silent film accompanied by improvisation on organ with live electronics.'

organfestival.com

THE 30TH ST ALBANS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL AND ORGAN COMPETITIONS (8-20 Jul) are dedicated to Peter Hurford, who died in March (see tributes, p.19). 'More than anything else,' says the Festival's director, David Titterington, 'this year we pay homage to Peter, who founded the Festival and Competitions in 1963. This 30th Festival is dedicated with gratitude and affection to Peter and to his wife, Pat.' Patricia Hurford pre-deceased her husband, in 2017.

Hurford's *Laudate Dominum Suite* features in the Festival's Three Choirs Concert (15 Jul) in which the combined choirs of St Albans Cathedral, Jesus College, Cambridge and Salisbury Cathedral are conducted *en masse* by their respective directors of music, Andrew Lucas, Richard Pinel and David Halls. And weaving

EVENTS

D'Arcy Trinkwon leads a masterclass for the Brighton District Organists Association (1-3pm, 27 Jul) at the Brighthelm Centre, Brighton. Repertoire is open. Contact 01273 273686.

The Carice Singers' 2019 tour, '**Sounding North**', features music from all five Nordic countries, including traditional sounds of *kulning* (Swedish herding calls) and *löyly* (the sound of steam in a Finnish sauna). Performances are at Cheltenham Music Festival (5 Jul), the Swedish Church in London (6 & 7 Jul), and St Mary's, Warwick (9 Jul). thecaricesingers.co.uk

Manchester International Festival marks the 200th anniversary of the Peterloo Massacre with the world premiere of Emily Howard's *The Anvil*. Billed as both an elegy to the fallen and a celebration of the city of Manchester, the work will be performed by the BBC Philharmonic, conducted by Ben Gernon, with soloists Christopher Purves (bar) and Kate Royal (sop), and a huge massed chorus featuring the BBC Singers with three Hallé choirs (7 Jul, Bridgewater Hall). mif.co.uk

At this year's **Lichfield Festival**, St Paul's Cathedral sub-organist William Fox performs music by Bach, Mozart, Saint-Saëns and Elgar on the organ of Lichfield Cathedral (11 Jul). Also that day, Voces8 sing music by Gibbons, Tallis, Rachmaninov and Sibelius, and a new work co-commissioned from the Festival's 2019 featured composer, Jonathan Dove. lichfieldfestival.org

'O Magnum Mysterium' - a concert of music (26 Aug) by Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Byrd, Cecilia McDowall, Morten Lauridsen, Imogen Holst, James MacMillan, Richard Rodney Bennett and Ola Gjeilo - will be sung by **Presteigne Festival's** Chamber Choir, conducted by Philip Sunderland (26 Aug). presteignefestival.com

NORTHERN IRELAND COMPETITION



CLARE STEVENS

▲ St Patrick's Anglican Cathedral, Armagh, is a venue for NIIOC

THE CATHEDRAL CITY OF ARMAGH plays host this year to the Northern Ireland International Organ Competition (19-21 August). The NIIOC is for organists under the age of 21, offering substantial monetary prizes, prestigious recital opportunities and masterclasses with leading organists across the globe.

Founded in 2011, the competition has attracted exceptionally gifted young players – previous winners including Ben Comeau, Ben Bloor, Richard Gowers and Andrew Forbes. Last year's competition was won by Johannes Krahl from Leipzig, Germany, who recently

performed one of his prizewinner's recitals at King's College, Cambridge, with a programme of Bach's 'Wedge' Prelude & Fugue, 'The Soul of the Lake' from Karg-Elert's *7 Pastels from the Lake of Constance*, and Duruflé's Suite op.5.

Martin Baker, master of music at Westminster Cathedral and president of the Royal College of Organists, will chair the jury for 2019, joined by Katherine Dienes-Williams, organist and master of the choristers at Guildford Cathedral, and David Hill, music director of the Bach Choir, principal conductor of the Schola Cantorum at Yale College, US, and artistic director of the Charles Wood Summer School, Armagh.

The competition is split into three categories: the Junior Category for players of Grades 4-5 standard, the Intermediate Category for players of Grades 6-8 standard, and the Senior Category for post-Grade 8 players, for which the first prize consists of £1,500 plus promoted recitals at seven internationally acclaimed venues.

Richard Yarr, founder and artistic director of the competition, said: 'We created the competition to discover talented young players and give them a platform to show everyone what they can do. Our competition continues to grow year on year as we attract top organists from across Europe and beyond. It has been a real privilege to see how past NIIOC winners have grown and developed their playing over the years.' niioc.com

Closing date for entries: Friday 19 July 2019.

PREMIERES [RP = REGIONAL PREMIERE]

Ian Venables: Requiem

Evoke/Ely
2 Jul, Holy Trinity, Sloane Square, London, UK

Cecilia McDowall: O sing unto the Lord a new song

Choir of King's College, Cambridge/Cleobury
3 Jul, King's College Chapel, Cambridge, UK

Claire M. Singer: Organ Concerto *gleann ciùin*

Claire M. Singer (org), members of the London Contemporary Orchestra
5 Jul, Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, UK

Emily Howard: The Anvil

Kate Royal (s), Christopher Purves (bar), BBC Singers, Hallé choirs, BBC Philharmonic/Gernon
7 Jul, Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, UK

Jessica Curry: She Who

National Youth Choirs of Great Britain/
Ellis-Peckham
7 Jul, Royal Festival Hall, London, UK

Einojuhani Rautavaara: A Book of Life (SATB version) [RP]

Savitri Singers/Nicholas
8 Jul, Tewkesbury Abbey, Cheltenham Music Festival, UK

Freya Waley-Cohen: Reflection on Christus

Factus Est

ORA Singers/Digby
10 Jul, Cheltenham College Chapel, Cheltenham Festival, UK

Jonathan Dove: New Work

Voces8
11 Jul, Lichfield Cathedral, Lichfield Festival, UK

Frederick Stocken: Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis

Southern Cathedrals Choirs
19 Jul, Southern Cathedrals Festival, Chichester, UK

James Burton: The Lost Words (choir & piano version)

Boston Symphony Children's Chorus/Burton
23 Jul, The Shed, Tanglewood, Lenox, MA, US

James MacMillan: A European Requiem [RP]

Trondheim Vokalensemble, Domkoret,
TSO-koret, Utopia & Reality Chamber Choir,
Trondheim Symphony Orchestra/MacMillan
28 Jul, Nidaros Cathedral, Trondheim, NO

James MacMillan: Toccata

John Scott Whiteley (org)
29 Jul, Gloucester Cathedral, UK

Bob Chilcott: Christmas Oratorio

Sols, Three Cathedral Choirs, Philharmonia Players/Partington
1 Aug, Gloucester Cathedral, UK

Kerensa Briggs: Light in Darkness

Katelyn Emerson (org)
1 Aug, Lochee Parish Church, UK

James MacMillan: Quickening (2018 version)

King's Singers, Royal Scottish National Orchestra & Junior Chorus, Edinburgh Festival Chorus/Gardner
10 Aug, Usher Hall, Edinburgh, UK

James MacMillan: Symphony no.5, 'Le grand inconnu'

The Sixteen, Genesis Sixteen, Scottish Chamber Orchestra/Christophers
17 Aug, Usher Hall, Edinburgh, UK

Jonathan Dove: We are one fire

BBC Symphony Chorus/Ferris
19 Aug, Royal Albert Hall, BBC Proms, London, UK

Please send items for News and Letters to the Editor for publication in the September 2019 issue to arrive by Friday 12 July:
choirandorgan@rhinegold.co.uk; The Editor, Choir & Organ, Mark Allen Group, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Rd, London SE24 0PB

SCHNITGER ACADEMY

GÖTEBORG INTERNATIONAL ORGAN FESTIVAL has unveiled plans for its first Arp Schnitger Academy to run from 5-9 August, two months before the main event. The Academy will be led by the Swedish organist and teacher Hans Davidsson, a former director of Gothenburg's GOArt organ research centre.

This year marks the 300th anniversary of the death of the north German organ builder Arp Schnitger (1648–1719), one of the most important figures in the history of the instrument. Schnitger was the first truly internationally active organ builder, combining the highest quality in craftsmanship and sound with a larger output of instruments (150) than any earlier organ builder.

The unique baroque organ in Örgryte New Church, built in the 1990s as a research project by organ builders from 12 countries and in collaboration between the University of Gothenburg and Chalmers University of Technology, was conceived in Schnitger's style. Participants in the Academy will study the music of Matthias Weckmann (1616–74) and Georg Böhm (1661–1733), under Davidsson's guidance, on this organ.

The Academy will also offer workshops on performing style and keyboard technique (especially clavichord) and lectures on Arp Schnitger's life, work and tonal concepts.

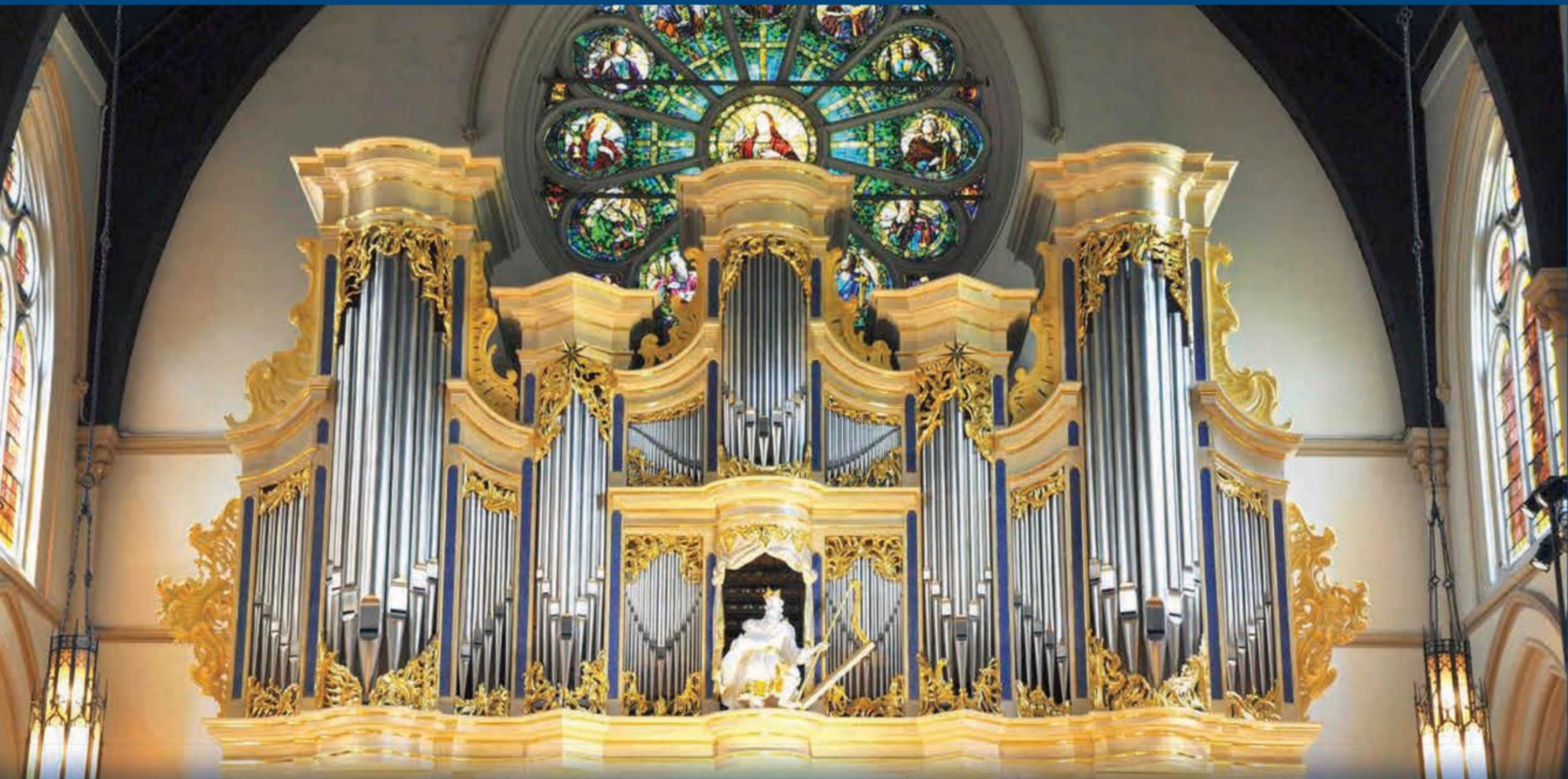
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► Hans Davidsson will lead the first Arp Schnitger Academy



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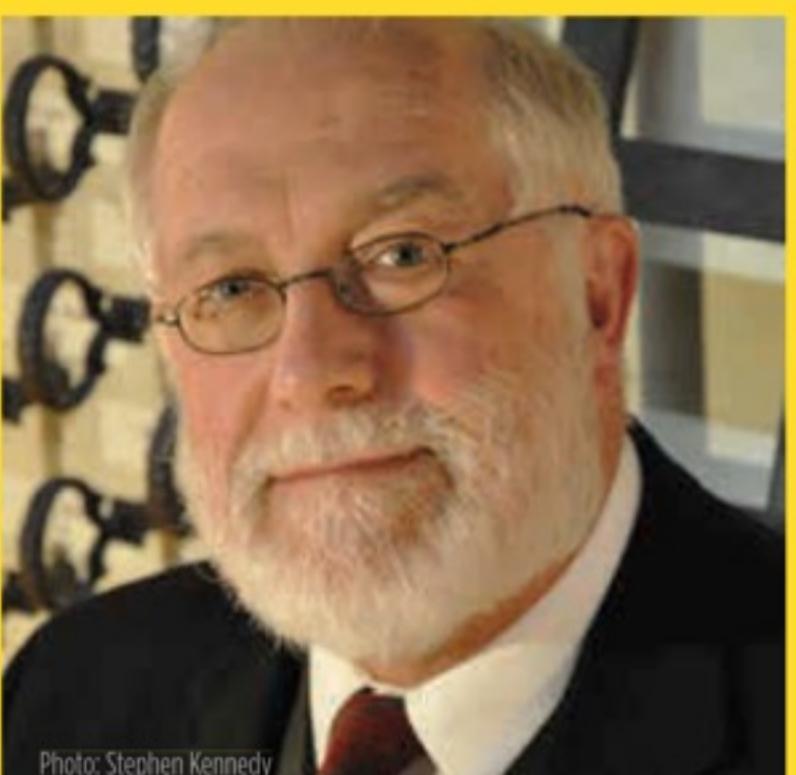
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esm.rochester.edu/organ/



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Joseph Flummerfelt

1937 – 2019

There is a moment at the end of 'Anthony O'Daly' from Samuel Barber's *Reincarnations* in which the collective dirge that drives the work collapses into an individual wail from each voice, 'After you, there is nothing,' and then, unified, the lament concludes, 'There is nothing but grief'. To sing those inconsolable bars of music under Joe Flummerfelt was to experience the essence of pain without fear. 'Grief': the guttural origin of the 'g', the growling 'r', the severe 'ie', the devastating finality of the explosive 'f'. No air left in the lungs. Desolation. As deep into the earth as we get.

Joseph Ross Flummerfelt, who died on 1 March, lived an extraordinary life. As artistic director of Westminster Choir College for over 35 years, he inspired young conductors and singers; he prepared choruses for the great orchestras of the world – at Westminster and for 40 years as director of choruses at the New York Philharmonic; he served as director of

accurately, for it was not just through his teaching but also in the sound he evoked from choirs, born of the breath. He often spoke of 'breath that opens, breath that releases. Breath that breaks through the fears that our ego always tries to impose on us, and allows us to have the courage to become vulnerable; breath that allows us to connect with that creative force which lives deeply within each of us.' This vulnerability led to an understanding that ensemble music-making involves a circular relationship between singer and conductor, the latter listening at the deepest level.

Though I feel as if I remain his lifelong student, my years of intense study with Joe ended decades ago. Yet I often find myself returning to notes I made as I prepared to graduate from his conducting programme at Westminster. There was the actual singing to remember, of course: preparing Brahms's Requiem with him was like hours of the best kind of church every day; singing Duruflé's Requiem was sublime in

He spoke of 'breath that opens, breath that releases. Breath that breaks through the fears'

choirs for over 60 Spoleto Festivals in Italy and Charleston, South Carolina; and, in his final decades, he was the sought-after master teacher of his generation. Our relationship began when I was an awestruck 24-year-old searching for something missing in my art. It developed into a friendship of understanding that eventually led us to write a book together – I simply did not want what I had learned to be lost when he was gone. It ended a few months ago, with a phone conversation I did not realise would be our last, in which he, diagnosed with brain cancer, accepted the inevitable with grace, noting his remarkable life and the sun now setting on it: 'I'm fine with that,' he said, with gratitude.

Joe's influence over several generations of choral musicians is impossible to capture

its purest sense: dignified. Beyond that, I distilled three main themes of our work. Community: 'the value of corporate music making,' he would say, and the great gift it offers us in a world that seems increasingly intent on division. Authenticity: to balance the cognitive and emotive, the intellect and the instinctive in making art, and to stay true to a 'journey that leads to ourselves' (again, in an environment aimed at the surface and material). Connection: to share without fear and to be in the moment, to acknowledge the need for connection and to invite it. These qualities Joe lived, but he also modelled, physically, in the breath-like gesture of his arms, the knowing smile and gleam in his eye, and especially in the colours he created with his extraordinarily expressive hands. The natural existence of



▲ Joseph Flummerfelt: his influence on choral musicians is impossible to capture

these qualities in Joe's world are why his death has been experienced so individually for so many thousands in the United States, each of us recalling a particular moment of communion that has forever changed the way we think of our art.

The unrelenting dirge of 'Anthony O'Daly' is answered in another of Barber's *Reincarnations* by the gentle *siciliana* of 'The Coolin', with its dark, internal supplication of yearning: 'Stay, stay with me, under my coat.' 'The Coolin' dwelled in Joe; he found in it a deep internal understanding of solitude, desire, and love – feelings that now hover above us in our mourning cloud. Yes, we grieve, but we do so in love – in the benevolence of attributes Joe laid before us: in the quiet non-act of listening, and in the courage of a single, uninhibited breath that opens up a world of sound in which the colour itself holds meaning. 'Just let go,' he would say to me; 'just let go and be.' It will be a long time, perhaps a lifetime, till I am able to *let go* of the idea of this indispensable friendship as a fundamental component of the 'Who I Am.' I share these thoughts knowing thousands of people could and would have written the exact same lines. ■

Donald Nally

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Benchmarks

Tributes to Peter Hurford, OBE (1930 – 2019)

Susan Landale

Winner of the first International Organ Competition at St Albans (1963)

Peter Hurford was someone I can never forget, although I cannot say that I knew him well or that I met him very often. But I most certainly owe him what was perhaps the greatest chance of my whole life.

It was thanks to him and to Felix Aprahamian that I first met André Marchal in April 1958, when the great French organist was not only giving a recital in the Royal Festival Hall, but was also conducting a masterclass for which young organists such as myself were invited to apply. This happened just after a year I had spent in London studying with Martindale Sidwell and James Gibb and, back in Scotland, my little parish church didn't really seem to be the place I wanted to spend the rest of my life.

Although I only discovered this much later, my application raised big doubts on the part of Peter and Felix: 'Who is this girl? We've never heard of her. We can't risk having her in the class, she might be a disaster!' I therefore received a very polite and helpful reply: 'As you are prepared to make such a long journey to London, and the timetable of such a class is always prone to disorganisation, we suggest you have a private lesson with André Marchal.' The rest is history.

The first International Organ Competition at St Albans, some five years after this first contact, took place in 1963, when as the happy winner I received a visit from Peter early the following morning – I seem to remember it was about 8am – asking me to give him a programme for the BBC who were to record the First Prizewinner later that day. My reaction was not particularly rapid, but it all worked out and I found myself at the Abbey organ recording, among other things, Messiaen's 'Dieu parmi nous', which had been in my programme for the finals. Certainly



COURTESY ST ALBANS INTERNATIONAL ORGAN FESTIVAL

▲ Peter Hurford: 'We all owe him so much'

Peter must have helped me put everything together, but he was in no way responsible for the unforgettable moment when, in the decrescendo on the ninth page of the work, I missed the swell box – admittedly a very heavy one – and more or less fell on to the Positive manual, creating a large cluster of which Messiaen was definitely not the composer. I rushed to the van outside the church where the technicians were operating and explained the situation; 'Oh, they said, 'we never noticed anything!'

Probably my last meeting with Peter, and his wife Pat, was at their house, during one of the competitions at which he had invited me to be on the jury. This was a treasured time, where we could talk about music, the Abbey organ and the successive competitions. A golden moment in a lovely relaxed atmosphere.

We all owe him so much; the memory of Peter is something that will ever stay with us.

Douglas Hollick

Former organ student

My first experience of Peter Hurford was as a teenager learning the organ, and attending the Organ in Sanity and Madness in the Albert Hall in September 1966, a brilliant mix of music and humour, but with a very serious message, and of course Peter's brainchild. I met him the following year, when he taught on one of the summer organ courses at the Royal Academy of Music in London, following which, with the confidence of youth, I asked if he would teach me. His answer initially was 'no', but he suggested John Birch. At that time Birch couldn't take me as a pupil, so I went back to Peter and asked again, and he agreed to hear me play after a Sunday Evensong in the Abbey. After I'd played the Bach G minor Fantasia & Fugue, he agreed to take me on, but added that I had a lot to learn!

So from 1968 to 1972 Peter was my

PETER HURFORD

◀ principal organ teacher, and was an inspiration, forming so much of what I later became as a mature artist. I remember lessons in the Abbey, often before Evensong, to which I would stay in the organ loft; I have never forgotten the shock on one occasion when, during the final blessing, he suddenly swung himself off the organ bench, said 'You can play the voluntary', and disappeared down the stairs before I could say anything. Once, during a lesson on his house organ in his Abbey Mill Lane home, I was playing some very ornamented French baroque music when he stopped me, took all the ornaments off the mantelpiece, turned to me and asked, 'Is the mantelpiece straight?' 'Yes.' 'Your musical line is bending under the weight of the ornaments.' He and I would often disagree, but those discussions – never arguments – would always be fruitful, and if I could prove that what I wanted to do was musically valid, even if different from what he would do, then he would agree to differ. Such a brilliant teacher to whom I owe so much.

When I wanted to move on after my first degree, he offered me the third organist post at the Abbey; I turned it down, as I wanted to study with Marie-Claire Alain, and he was instrumental in helping me achieve that through his generous recommendation – something which again happened when

I went to study for a time with Gustav Leonhardt. During the 1980s, I spent six years as director of music for two churches in Totnes, South Devon; Peter twice came and played wonderful concerts: the first for the inauguration of the Bill Drake organ in St John's, and the second a few years later for the re-inauguration of the 'Father' Willis in St Mary's. The first time he was suffering from flu, and yet still managed to play brilliantly to a packed church, albeit sweating rather profusely by the end, no doubt with a bit of a temperature. As he got off the organ bench, the front crease of both legs of his (old) dress suit split, not too noticeable as he walked off to the vestry! – but it was obvious that he would have to play an encore, so Bill Drake and I quickly had his trousers off, inside out, masking-taped the splits, back on, and audience still applauding, out he went and played his encore. Peter, with his wonderful sense of humour, certainly appreciated the joke.

Peter was a wonderful man, musician and teacher, to whom I owe more than to almost anyone else in my seeking to become a musician. May he rest in peace, and play and sing well with the heavenly choirs.

Chris Hazell

Recording producer

My first recording as Peter's producer

took place in 1974 in Toronto, at Our Lady of Sorrows – a relatively small church with beautiful acoustics and a perfectly suited Casavant organ. This combination epitomised Peter's view on playing the organ – first and foremost, that the sound should entice the listener. It would be of little consequence, however good the technique and performance, if the sound didn't attract. Although not a large instrument, the Casavant offered Peter the chance to create a perfect soundscape for whatever piece he was playing. He was not afraid to mix combinations of stops that most of us would look at very dubiously, but they always worked. (I learned a huge amount from him about this part of organ playing, and it has been immensely useful to me as a village organist). He was particularly good at choosing sounds that allowed for great clarity in contrapuntal works. Combined with a virtuosic technique and awareness of how the acoustics affected his touch, I often wondered whether he had a third hand tucked away somewhere! He let large-scale works unfold naturally, building up without over-registrating, and allowing the music to speak for itself. All these aspects of performance were based on historically informed principles. Peter was not only a brilliant exponent of baroque music – he brought these same principles to romantic and more modern music, ranging from César Franck to Hindemith and Poulenc.

Finding the combination of right church/acoustics/organ was often difficult. Not surprisingly this entailed a lot of research, and a great deal of travel. When the decision was made to record the complete organ works of Bach, we had the huge task of deciding what to record where. In the end we travelled to the United States, Australia and quite a lot of Europe in our quest, fitting in discs of works from other periods on the way.

We worked together for more than 20 years, often in faraway places, and shared our views on all aspects of music and life in general. We became very close friends and I learned a vast amount from him. We made over 70 discs, both LP and on into CD. The proof of his extraordinary contribution to recording the organ is that all his discs that were originally analogue, especially some of

▼ Peter at the console of his house organ; the photo is now on display in St Albans Museum



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the Bach, were transferred to digital format. He has left us a wonderful legacy, and I am both proud and extremely privileged to have been a part of it.

Thomas Trotter

Winner of the Interpretation first prize, International Organ Competition at St Albans, 1979

I first met Peter at the 1979 St Albans Organ Festival, at which I was a competitor. With his cool Michael Caine looks and easy manner, he cut a dash and soon had us all under his charismatic spell. He was certainly the man of the moment, having just completed a highly acclaimed first Bach cycle for Decca and about to embark on a second for the BBC. Those broadcasts were a revelation: he made the organ sing in the chorales and dance in the free works. His playing was characterised

Peter loved talking to his audiences and was very good at it, even if he didn't always know when to stop. One of his last concerts was on the Collins at Turner Sims in Southampton University. The concert was overrunning, and I'll never forget Pat hissing at him from the side to stop talking and just play. His Bach cycle at the 2000 Edinburgh Festival was a triumph, but not without a cost, and soon after he suffered a stroke. He was back on the bench within months, although he never fully regained his confidence as a live player. He was always more comfortable in a recording situation anyway, returning to his old form with a final Bach recording made on historic organs at Groningen and Norden. When Peter retired he gave me his old cummerbund, which I still wear, and I often think of him before stepping onto the concert platform.

'I'll never forget Pat hissing at Peter from the side to stop talking and just play'

by brisk tempi, sparkling registrations and highly articulated musical lines, perfectly suited to the brightly voiced neo-classical organs of the day. Nowadays some might find this style a little old-fashioned, but we are all a product of our own time whether we like it or not, and at that time his invigorating performances were a breath of fresh air. After St Albans, I had a few lessons with him and was struck by his clarity of thought and logical approach, a philosophy which later formed the basis for his brilliant book, *Making music at the organ*.

I got to know Peter on a more personal level when he graciously invited me to partner him in a Decca recording of the Soler keyboard concertos at the 'New' Cathedral (actually completed in 1733!) in the beautiful historic city of Salamanca. As usual he was accompanied by his wife, Pat, who acted as his assistant, pulling stops and turning pages with her customary aplomb. We spent our down-time sitting in the cafes around the Cathedral, or playing board games back at the hotel. Both of them were killer Boggle players, as I discovered to my cost.

I sometimes wonder if Peter would have achieved so much without Pat at his side. She enabled him to realise the full extent of his talent, and together they were a great team. After Peter's diagnosis, he relied on Pat more and more. When his condition deteriorated he moved to a nursing home just outside St Albans – the same home where Pat was cared for after her stroke in 2017. Maybe that was how it was meant to be. I visited her a few weeks before she died, and the plan was for us to go and see Peter, whose room was just across the courtyard; but in the event Pat wasn't well enough to get up, so I didn't see him after all. Secretly I was relieved, since the Peter I knew had long gone. It was a great shock to everyone when Pat died first, predeceasing Peter by more than a year. That was surely not how it was meant to be.

Peter and Pat were deeply proud of their three children, Heather, Michael and Richard, who all gave moving tributes at his funeral in March. His contribution to the musical world was immense, and they both touched the lives of so many people in so many different ways. Now that they are reunited, may they rest in peace.



▲ In the guise of J.S. Bach at the 1966 centenary concert for the Royal College of Organists

Lesley King

Chairman, St Albans International Organ Festival

It's fair to say that the St Albans International Organ Festival played a part in the decision my husband and I made to move to St Albans in 1993. Having known and admired Peter as a performer for many years, the existence of 'his' biennial Festival tipped the balance in favour of St Albans over several other possible locations. Of course, by then Peter was not involved directly in organising the Festival, but nevertheless he, and wife Pat, were still loyally supporting such events as they could, consistent with his then very full concert schedule.

It was around four years later, when I first became chairman of the Festival, that I began to get better acquainted with the man beyond the performer. To my relief, in addition to the attributes I might have expected to find from my awareness of the public persona – courtesy, incisiveness, a liking for punctuality – I also found a very astute business man, not at all 'precious' about his creation. He was immediately interested in anything new, and was always willing, but only when asked, to provide wise counsel to this newcomer – making him an exemplary founder and honorary president. He had a strong and highly developed financial awareness – after all, as he often said, there only was a second Festival because the first one in 1963 had generated a 10/- (50p) profit! The Festival archive includes the accounts from these early years, ▷



▲ St Albans International Organ Festival, 2010: (from left) artistic director David Titterington, founder Peter Hurford, The Countess of Verulam (patron, and at that time Lord-Lieutenant), and chairman Lesley King

◀ all completed meticulously in Peter's own hand. There was no area of the festival of which he lacked direct practical experience, making him an invaluable source of information – and some excellent tales!

Fifty-six years on, it is a testament to Peter's original vision that the Festival which he founded, so ably supported by Pat, continues to exist much in the form in which it was originally conceived in what is in many respects a very different world. It continues to stand for those things that were so important to him: providing a platform for young organists from around the world to give of their best, and the promotion of the pipe organ as an instrument of mainstream music-making.

The 30th St Albans International Organ Festival, running from 8-20 July 2019, is dedicated to the memory of Peter and Pat Hurford.

David Titterington

Artistic and executive director, St Albans International Organ Festival, and quoting Piet Kee, former jury member
Writing on the cusp of the 30th International Organ Festival, it is hard to believe that neither Peter nor Pat will be able to share in

our celebrations marking what is another milestone in the life of his extraordinary legacy.

It would be untrue to say I was not filled with some trepidation when I was appointed artistic director in 2007, assuming responsibility for what is arguably the world's most famous organ competition, and certainly one of the world's longest-running music competitions of its kind. But anxiety was soon dispelled, and I could not have been met with a more welcoming, supportive and encouraging team of founders than Peter and Pat. They were truly a team of complementary skill sets and I often found myself seeking their wise counsel, particularly when I wanted to implement changes to the competitions that better reflected the evolving profession. Peter was always quick to grasp that competitions should evolve just as our musical interpretations reflect the times in which we live: he lived by what he believed and was fearless in expressing it.

From the festival's inception, two guiding principles still determine our core activity:

- To promote the organ as a solo instrument in its own right and commission new music while remaining close to the

cathedral community of St Albans around which the festival was established in 1963.

► To promote the very highest ideals of performance locally, nationally and internationally by means of the two biennial competitions in interpretation and improvisation, the annual Saturday Concert Series, masterclasses, lectures, and to provide a performance platform for young upcoming musicians.

'But what is it that makes St Albans so special?' is a question often posed to me, and I find myself returning to some core tropes: integrity, longevity, supportive, friendly, inspiring and genuinely international.

It is this 'internationalism' that was Peter Hurford's trope from the very beginning, when early juries comprised such luminaries as Marie-Claire Alain, Anton Heiller, Piet Kee and Luigi Fernando Tagliavini. Indeed, Marie-Claire Alain and Piet Kee returned for a further 17 festivals between them.

In 2009, I invited Piet Kee to return to St Albans as our guest of honour for the International Organ Festival Society's AGM, and I would like to share and conclude with an extract from Piet's charming and anecdotal speech that evening:

'The first time I was in St Albans I found in good old England an overwhelming, enchanting cathedral building, an excellent organ, cleverly designed, and I met a remarkable gentleman: Peter Hurford, a very special man. And – no coincidence – Ralph Downes was there as well. It was at your first Organ Festival in 1963. I still see the three of us – Ralph, Peter and me – walking from Abbey Mill Lane uphill, quite fast. "Peter walks fast and thinks fast," is what Ralph said. There are so many memories, certainly, of that first festival. I had the privilege to stay at 31 Abbey Mill Lane, enjoying the presence of three lovely children in that home, full of the great spirit and warmth of Pat and Peter, living, acting and thinking fast indeed. There are the memories, of course, of the jury members and participants from that first time – of Marie-Claire Alain, for instance, whom I met afterwards so often in all kinds of spots in the world as a sister in art of the same age. And of Susan Landale, with whom I had dinner this week, who was 46 years ago the first winner of the interpretation competition.' ■



WILLIAM MCVICKER

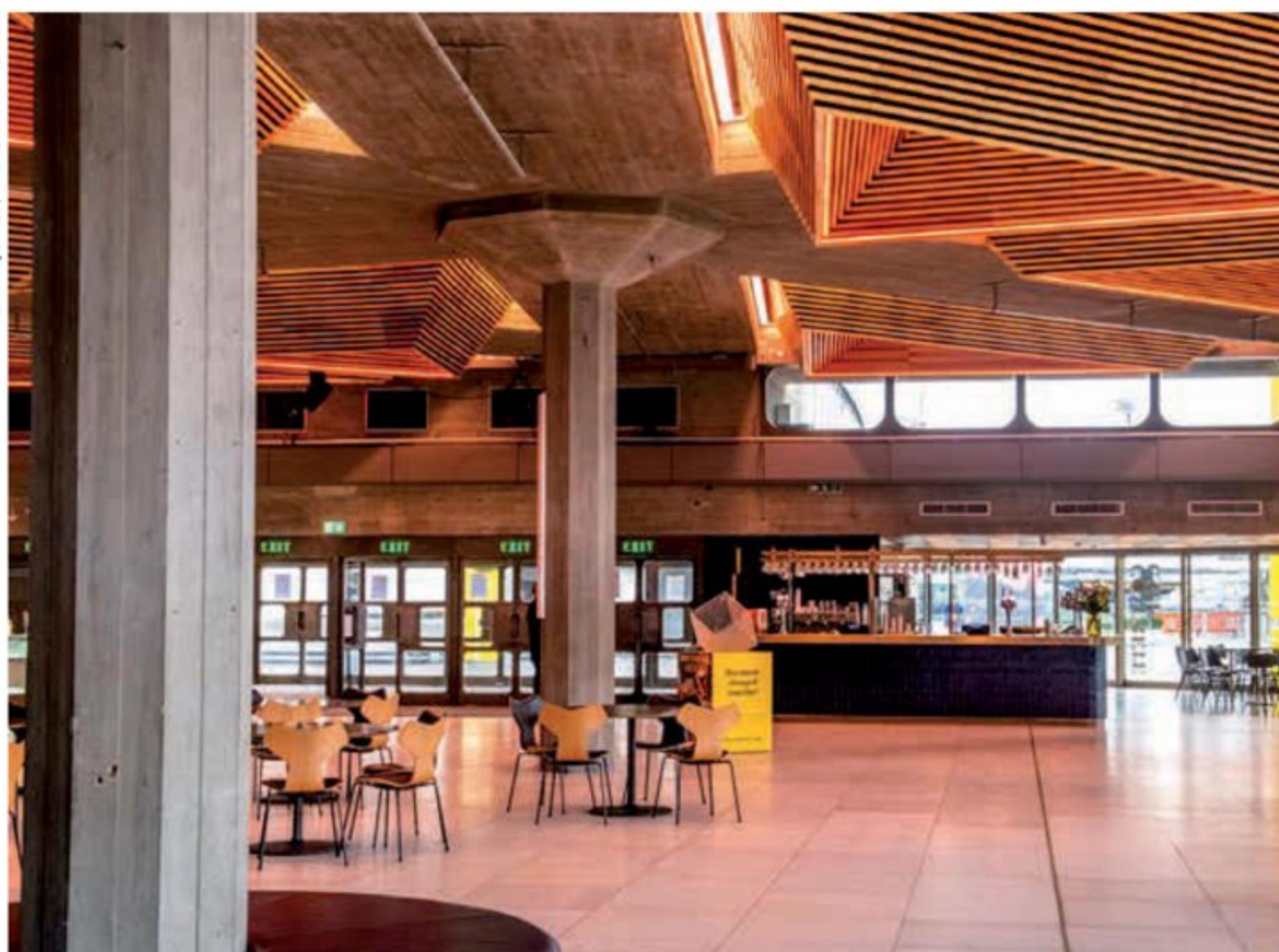
A child of its time

The 1960s Flentrop organ in London's Queen Elizabeth Hall is one of the capital's best-kept secrets. Now, after a restoration by Mander Organs in early 2019, it is set to preen its feathers again in a new concerto. **William McVicker** reports

The Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room were opened by Her Majesty the Queen on 1 March 1967. With just over 900 seats, the auditorium was designed for smaller musical ensembles and chamber orchestras, while the even smaller 372-seat Purcell Room was considered suitable for chamber music, mime, soloists and cabaret. A year later, on 9 July 1968, Her Majesty the Queen returned to Southbank Centre, this time to open the Hayward Gallery.

The brutalist qualities of the architecture have long been a focus of criticism; it's a bit like Marmite – you either love it or hate it. A key element of the recent work has been to emphasise the brutalist detailing of the buildings, rather than being an apologist for its 'craggy geology'. There grew a perception that the concrete blockiness of the site was a chronic failure, and over the years a series of high-flying architects were engaged to revitalise the area with a masterplan which involved the addition of multiple food and retail opportunities. ▶

▲ The neo-baroque Flentrop organ in the Queen Elizabeth Hall was conceived at the height of the Organ Reform. It was restored by Mander Organs in early 2019



▲ The brutalist architecture of Southbank Centre reflects the ethos of the 1960s

▲ The foyer after its refurbishment

► The organ before its restoration. It is housed in an underground storage chamber, being raised to stage level when in use and standing in a central position at the back of the stage

Recently, yet another rethink of the 1960s concrete jungle was undertaken. This time the answer was considered to be 'leave it alone': tidy it up, revamp the foyer and backstage facilities, add improved and new ventilation, lighting systems and production infrastructure – all under the subtitle 'environmentally improved facilities' – but above all to allow the architecture to speak for itself. Empathising with its urban roots, the Queen Elizabeth Hall conservatory sports a new fern garden, set around a sculptural obelisk by artist Cyprien Galliard made from the crushed concrete of a demolished Glasgow housing estate.

Readers can judge the results for themselves; but a visitor to Southbank Centre today will discover a busy arts centre, bustling with multifarious activities

– as well as those coveted retail opportunities. The site has been transformed over a 15-year period, beginning with the refurbishment of the Royal Festival Hall in 2005 and concluding with the restoration of the Queen Elizabeth Hall (QE) and Purcell Room auditoria, which reopened in April 2018; the work was undertaken by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios with Max Fordham, Arup and BAM Construction.

The QE has a mixture of timber-lined and concrete performance spaces; the surfaces of these structures have been cleaned, and the panelling French-polished. During construction, the concrete was poured into board-linings which revealed the grain of the timber; the concrete (typical of its age) thus has a curious artistic quality of its own. Cleaning and restoring it involved using Arte Mundit – a latex poultice often used in restoration schemes to treat the sensitive detailing of plasterwork or classical sculptures. The acoustics of the hall have been improved by adding a timber lining to the stage; the aluminium and leather seats (period features in their own right) have been reupholstered.

Unbeknown to many, the hall has an organ built in 1966 by D.A. Flentrop of Zaandam, Holland, to a specification approved by Ralph Downes. Installed at a cost of some £9,000, when in use it stands in a central position at the back of the stage and when not required it can be lowered into an underground storage chamber. Once on stage, the organ runs on a railway track and has the unusual addition of a handbrake. Few organs can claim such a roadworthy feature.

The instrument was installed ready for the opening of the hall in 1967. The manuals are of 56

notes and the radiating and concave pedals are of 32. The instrument is unusually compact; it has suspended mechanical action and is provided with six composition pedals. The wind pressure is 70mm and the pipework enjoys 'no-holes-barred' open-foot voicing. The small specification packs a considerable punch, which it surely needs to do in such a relatively large arena. The Sub Bass is made of mahogany, the soundboards are of mahogany and oak. Space was prepared for a Pedal reed, but this was never installed. The largest façade pipes are of copper (Pedal Principal), and in the centre, the tin pipes of the Great Organ form part of the open-plan display. The organ has been lovingly restored in the early part of 2019 by Mander Organs, who have had care of the instrument since its installation.

As with other architectural features of the hall, the organ wears its 1960s badge with pride. Conceived at the height of the Organ Reform, it is very much a child of its time; the lean specification is uncompromisingly neo-baroque and it does not especially lend itself even to classical French repertoire. What was it designed to do? In the early

Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre, London

D.A. FLENTROP (1966)

GREAT

(C-g³, 56 notes)

Chimney Flute

PEDAL

(C-g¹, 32 notes)

Sub Bass

Principal

Principal

Stopped Flute

Stopped Flute

Spitz Flute

Spitz Flute

Sesquialtera (treble and bass)

Sesquialtera (treble and bass)

Mixture

Mixture

16

8

8

4

SWELL

(C-g³, 56 notes)

Stopped Diapason

Six composition pedals

Wind pressure 70mm

Koppel Flute

a¹=440Hz and tuned to equal

Octave

temperament

Nasard

2

Cremona

1¹/3

Tremulant

8



COURTESY WILLIAM MCVICKER



▲ The high-quality tin pipework of the cone-tuned Great Organ

days, the organ was used for 'early music', featuring regularly in performances of lesser-known Handel oratorios, with the choir ranged either side of the organ – as sometimes illustrated in 18th-century wood-cuts of large-scale performances of *Messiah*. Pitched at $a^1=440\text{Hz}$ and tuned to equal temperament, the organ was built a decade too early to have been caught up in the burgeoning early music movement, which sought to establish earlier performing pitches and temperaments. In some ways, the organ has been left stranded – an instrument designed for an approach to performance practice which has been superseded by the revisionism of the early music movement. The organ does have its own very considerable character and musical integrity, and these have been respected during restoration.

Looking back into the archives, it appears that the organ was used at a recital given by Peter Hurford on 8 June 1967 for a programme of Bach, Dandrieu, Gigout and Alain. Thereafter the instrument was played by Karl Richter, Gustav Leonhardt, Lionel Rogg, Gillian Weir and Margaret Phillips in concerts which also featured music for harpsichord. Frequent recitals followed, including a concert given by Martin Neary on New Year's Day 1969, featuring a specially written sonata by Sebastian Forbes. The organ was used by Simon Preston for a set of recordings of the complete Handel organ concertos with the Yehudi

Menuhin Orchestra and the Bath Festival Orchestra – a recording which also featured the organs of The Merchant Taylor's Hall, Great Packington Parish Church and St Paul's Girl's School, Hammersmith. In more recent times, David Goode performed *The Art of Fugue* on the instrument, Thomas Trotter performed Bach's six trio sonatas, and Margaret Phillips returned to renew her acquaintance with the organ in a programme of Bach's 18 chorales.

The first performance on the restored organ will be quite different to that in 1967: commissioned for the New Music Biennial by the London Contemporary Orchestra, Claire M. Singer has written a concerto, *gleann ciùin*, which will be performed on Friday 5 July 2019 at 6.30pm. Singer is a composer, producer and performer who creates acoustic and electronic music as well as films and installations; her concerto will explore the mechanical nature of the organ. A recipient of the inaugural Oram Awards from the PRS Foundation and New BBC Radiophonic Workshop, Claire's new work will tour the UK, following the first performance at Southbank Centre. ■

William McVicker is organ curator at the Royal Festival Hall, chairman of the Association of Independent Organ Advisers, and Professor of Organology at the Royal Academy of Music, of which he is an Honorary Associate. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Musical Instrument Technology.

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Taking stock

As he approaches his 60th birthday, Sir James MacMillan talks to **Rebecca Tavener** about formative influences, silence, and the power of music – ‘the most spiritual of the arts’ – to regenerate communities

As he enters his seventh decade, Sir James MacMillan has been wondering about the people who are discovering his music for the first time: what is the best route in? Is it via his chamber music, orchestral works, or his magnificently burgeoning collection of choral music? Surely, much of the time, it must be the latter, particularly via his vast back-catalogue and constant fresh flow of new sacred works. This is not only because the human voice is often the easiest portal through which newcomers approach contemporary music, but also because sacred music in recent times has been tapping into what some cynics might call a fashion but which more nuanced thinkers understand to be a deep-seated desire for the bridge that sacred music builds between the human psyche and the numinous – a concept more venerable than any religious system.

Sir James describes music as the most spiritual of the arts, and his personal faith informs his work

more overtly than most of today’s composers. I visit him at home on the coast of Ayrshire to ask him about turning 60, and how his journey of faith has been mapped through his music. Our conversation is underscored by a cheery, irregular ostinato as Lynne, Lady MacMillan, chops vegetables to make soup for our lunch – are you thinking about John Cage? Do, he’s far from irrelevant.

Starting with the obvious question about how it feels to be 60, MacMillan agrees that it’s about taking stock: ‘I still feel 21 in some ways (I’m just joking), but for the music world it’s a way of focusing on what a composer is doing, and it’s a good way to encourage the audience to discover what a composer is about.’ MacMillan has recognised a bond between music and the spiritual life since early childhood. He speaks of his days as a ‘weedy tenor’, pressganged by nuns into playing the piano for liturgies, eventually playing the organ in his local church. As a small boy he was taken on holiday



the Passion settings – a trail blazed by Penderecki in the 1960s and Arvo Pärt in the 80s.'

Two of MacMillan's most influential and popular works emerged in 1990, and I wondered whether the angry young man of *Cantos Sagrados* was still inside, and if the rage against the persecution of those who are 'other', as expressed in *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie*, has subsided. 'I was working out my own ways of dealing with the parallels between the political and the religious. I've changed a lot since then and I sometimes ask myself whether I could actually write something like that now – it would be very different. I'm very proud of *Cantos Sagrados*, but it's like reading old letters. I've always been interested in how music might reverberate around bigger contexts, whether it be cultural, religious, political issues. Works like these helped me to do that: perhaps I wrote too much in the programme note about *Confession*? Music is the most abstract of the arts, so ultimately it's the sound of *Confession*, its convulsions, that communicates regardless of its specifics.'

MacMillan is not convinced of the importance for composers to challenge their listeners not only with their music but also with ideas: 'I'm in a constant dialogue with myself about that, and my mind changes at least twice a day! Music communicates beyond words and ideas – at the back of my anxiety about this debate is the way the arts can be hijacked for political ends. I'm more and more aware of that, and nervous about it.' It seems that his willingness to engage in public with political issues is in the past: 'After the [2014 Scottish] Independence referendum, I decided I wouldn't get involved in making political statements. I've deliberately not said anything about Brexit because these referenda have been toxic – they've divided families, split friends up and so on. Saying anything that could be interpreted as partisan can alienate people. I don't know that this is what musicians should be about.'

He is even-handedly catholic in the broadest sense, composing for Protestant situations and writing sacred works for concert choirs as well as his beloved Roman church. In previous issues of C&O his work from within the ecclesiastical establishment, directing the music at St Columba's Parish Church in Glasgow and composing simple choral and congregational music, has been exhaustively covered. This is all in the past, however, dictated partly by his move to the country but also by a growing frustration with the straitjacketing effect of present-day liturgical conformity.

New projects are engaging the energies of the MacMillans nowadays, in particular the annual Cumnock Tryst festival. How important is the

◀ James MacMillan in the Sistine Chapel in April 2018 at the time of the Vatican performance of his *Stabat Mater*, commissioned by the Genesis Foundation. His personal faith informs his work more overtly than most of today's composers

to visit relatives in Edinburgh. Going *en famille* to Mass at St Mary's Metropolitan Cathedral, the music made him wonder 'what was this fantastic sound? And what did it have to do with what was going on, the incense, people in robes and everything?' Arthur Oldham, founder of the Edinburgh Festival Chorus, directed the choir and encouraged a bright, vibrato-rich, Italianate sound. That continental vocal quality became a subliminal influence on Scotland's greatest composer of sacred music since the Reformation. It took a while for him to turn it into music, however: 'It wasn't until much, much later, after my entry into modernism where religion was off limits, that I realised that I could in some way address spiritual questions in the music of today. To begin with, it was things like music theatre works such as *Busqueda*, mixing the secular and the sacred, new and old, Latin and English, political and ecclesial. After that I began to realise that traditional formats could still work, like

► At home in the countryside: 'Being submerged in the silence of this place is great... Here, the ambient sounds are mainly wind and water'

PHOTOGRAPH © 2019 MARC MARNIE

↳ spiritual element there? 'This is our new enthusiasm and we've loved putting it together over the last few years. It's a secular festival, meant for everyone, but one of the big threads (along with brass music) is choral music – much sacred music has been performed but there's an awful lot of secular music as well. Is there a wider spiritual dimension? Probably, and it's all to do with regeneration of a damaged community. There's not much we as musicians can do in economic or political terms, but Cumnock is a community that has been hit hard in recent years through the disappearance of the mining industry (my grandfather was a coal-miner), and there's been a defeatist message about the area that it is an "ex-mining community". It's up to the politicians and business people who are working to change that, but what we can do is regenerate the "spirit" in the widest possible sense, and we have a role to play through music.'

MacMillan enjoys working with young composers and thinkers and has been deeply engaged with the TheoArtistry programme at St Andrews University, recently featured in C&O; is anything similar in

will be at Christmas 2020 with the LPO; I will then conduct the Australian premiere, and there will also be performances in Amsterdam and New York.'

Sir James speaks of how his new location aids his creativity: 'Being submerged in the silence of this place is great – not that the city can't be conducive to creativity. I often had this conversation with Peter Maxwell Davies: he said he needed the silence he found living and working on Hoy, but recognised that most of us didn't. I lived in a noisy place in Glasgow for 30-odd years and brought noisy children up there. At my current stage, the need for silence has become a thing and I'm now giving lectures on the importance of silence to composers – and it's not just about John Cage! Here, the ambient sounds are mainly wind and water: there's a little brook that runs around the hill on this land, and when the wind dies down you can hear it. There's no such thing as "silence".'

MacMillan's personal modesty is legendary, so I have to probe to see if his major success is a spur or an impediment to inspiration or, indeed, the spiritual life. 'If I feel in my own self that I've produced something successful – I don't mean critical,

'There's not much we as musicians can do in economic or political terms, but we can regenerate the "spirit" in the widest possible sense – we have a role to play through music'

the pipeline? 'I'm constantly working with the LPO, mentoring their young composers, not on a theological basis although we've been looking at the idea of cantus firmus. They're writing orchestral music based on that and last year we looked at Gregorian Chant; the brief was to look at the Liber Usualis or the Graduale Romanum, choose a favourite chant and write a piece of orchestral music based on it – in these secular situations I bring to the table a deep love of liturgical music.'

There are some composers who work best when offered a particular text, and others who always want to choose their own when commissioned. MacMillan is not set in his ways, enjoying 'a bit of both. I'm writing a big piece just now, a *Christmas Oratorio*, a full evening's work in two parts. It uses Bach's as a kind of template, but there's no liturgical intent – I've been given *carte blanche* to decide the texts. I've been thinking not just about what scriptural elements to use but also what poetical elements to include. I've been setting a poem by Robert Southall, the British Jesuit, who has written two wonderful Christmas poems including one that is quite stark and violent – "The Burning Babe". The premiere

audience, or even commercial success (which doesn't mean much, actually), [but] an *artistic* success – the burden that places on you to go beyond it is huge. After the *Stabat Mater*, of which I'm very proud, I wondered "what can I do now?"; it forces you to rethink priorities and to work hard, and to be inspired to find that new direction.'

The Edinburgh International Festival will present some significant performances to mark MacMillan's 60th birthday. On 10 August a new version of *Quickening* (1988), with The King's Singers as soloists, will be premiered including a new additional a cappella movement, setting the poem by Michael Symmons Roberts not included in the original cycle. The composer describes the new movement as 'a moment of repose and intimacy contrasting with the huge orchestral sound.' On 17 August comes the world premiere of Symphony no.5 with extensive forces including The Sixteen and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. 'I've just completed it and it's called *Le grand inconnu*, about the Holy Spirit. I was looking at all these wonderful settings of "Veni creator" and "Veni sancte spiritus", but I wanted it to be different; it had to be an exploration of the Holy ▶





◀ In St John's Church for the Cumnock Tryst, the annual festival MacMillan set up to regenerate his home town

« Spirit in musical and theological terms, so I began to look at words and sounds associated with the Holy Spirit such as the Hebrew, Greek and Latin words for “breath”; so most of the first movement is just about making those sounds. Eventually I do get round to setting *real* text with St John of the Cross, but to be able to think about a much more impressionistic choral world, using sounds and single words, has been an important development for me.»

There are tribute concerts everywhere this year, amateur and professional, and no doubt a wave of new recordings will emerge. MacMillan is now a ‘national treasure’ and we wish him many more decades of composing in the ‘silence’ of his new home on a hill with his studio at the top of house. We speak of John Cage, who wanted to call his infamous 4'33" ‘Silent Prayer’, and Cage’s concern with ambient sounds. And as we talk, my husband notices the emerging score of a 40-part motet on MacMillan’s desk (a commission from ORA Singers), and hears birdsong and the patter of avian and squirrel feet scampering on the roof as well as the distant sound of Lynne, engaged energetically in soup-making. Weather, also, is a feature of this ‘silence’, and as we depart, Storm Erik heads in, coinciding with a spring tide which sends waves crashing over our little car on the coast road like the ‘convulsions’ in *Confession of Isobel Gowdie*. ■

James MacMillan’s music is published by Boosey & Hawkes.

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Rebecca Tavener is a singer and director specialising in early and contemporary music. She is founder-director of Canty, Scotland’s only professional medieval music group.

James MacMillan Choral and Organ Highlights (July to December 2019)

O Virgo prudentissima

The Sixteen / Harry Christophers (dir)
8 Jul, Bridgewater Hall,
Manchester (and touring), UK

Miserere

ORA Singers / Suzi Digby (dir)
10 Jul, Cheltenham College Chapel,
Cheltenham Music Festival, UK

Miserere

Seven Last Words from the Cross
Choir of Merton College Oxford,
Bristol Ensemble / Benjamin
Nicholas (dir)
26 Jul, Tewkesbury Abbey,
Three Choirs Festival, UK

A European Requiem (Norwegian
premiere)
Trondheim Vokalensemble,

TSO-koret, Utopia & Reality
Chamber Choir, Trondheim
Symphony Orchestra /
James MacMillan (dir)
28 Jul, Nidaros Cathedral,
Trondheim, NO

Toccata (world premiere)
Gaudeamus in loci pace
John Scott Whiteley (org)
29 Jul, Gloucester Cathedral,
Three Choirs Festival, UK

Quicken (premiere of 2018
version)
The King’s Singers, Royal Scottish
National Orchestra & Junior
Chorus, Edinburgh Festival
Chorus / Edward Gardner (dir)
10 Aug, Usher Hall, Edinburgh
International Festival, UK

All the Hills and Vales Along The Culham Motets

Gwilym Bowen (t), National Youth
Choir of Scotland, Whitburn Brass
Band, Quatuor Mona Quartet /
Christopher Bell (dir)
16 Aug, Greyfriars Kirk,
Edinburgh International
Festival, UK

Symphony no.5, ‘Le grand
inconnu’ (world premiere)
The Sixteen, Genesis Sixteen,
Scottish Chamber Orchestra /
Harry Christophers (dir)
17 Aug, Usher Hall, Edinburgh
International Festival, UK

The Cumnock Tryst
3-6 Oct, James MacMillan’s festival
in Cumnock, Ayrshire, UK

Symphony no.5, ‘Le grand inconnu’ (London premiere)

The Sun Danced (UK premiere)
The Sixteen, Genesis Sixteen,
Britten Sinfonia / Harry
Christophers (dir)
14 Oct, Barbican, London, UK

Stabat Mater

Miserere (US premiere)
The Sixteen, Britten Sinfonia /
Harry Christophers (dir)
7 Nov, Lincoln Center, New York, US

Miserere (Portuguese premiere)
Coro Casa da Música / Paul Hillier
(dir)
17 Nov, Casa da Música, Porto, PT

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Stanford's magnum opus marking the end of the first world war has been largely neglected in the intervening century, only seeing the light of day thanks to the efforts of editor Jeremy Dibble. On this premiere recording, it receives 'an impressive reading' from the BBC's Welsh forces (see Star Review, p.85).

Courtesy of Lyrita and Select Music, we have 5 copies to give away; quote code 'STANFORD'.

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Claire Singer (org), members of London Contemporary Orchestra
6.30pm, 5 July, Queen Elizabeth Hall, London

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WILLIAM MCWICKER

The Queen Elizabeth Hall's Flentrop organ (see feature, p.23), recently restored by Mander Organs, takes pride of place in the world premiere of Claire Singer's Organ Concerto, commissioned for Southbank Centre's New Music Biennial. The event is free, but ticketed; tickets do not guarantee entry, and admission is on a first-come, first-served basis.

Southbank Centre is offering a pair of tickets with guaranteed entry and a glass of prosecco each to toast the return of the Queen Elizabeth Hall organ; quote code 'QEY'.

NB: Offer ends Monday 1 July.

SCORES AND TICKETS JAMES MACMILLAN



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The pre-eminent Scottish composer of his generation, James MacMillan (see cover story, p.28) has a vast catalogue of works spanning diverse genres including opera, orchestral and chamber music, vocal music, and choral works ranging from short motets to settings of the St John and St Luke Passions, the *Stabat Mater*, and the *Seven Last Words from the Cross*.

To celebrate MacMillan's 60th birthday year, C&O readers have the chance enjoy three great offers:

- MacMillan's publisher, Boosey & Hawkes, is offering C&O readers a 10% discount on all the composer's scores through July; visit boosey.com/macmillanoffer and quote code 'MACMILLAN10'.
- Courtesy of the Three Choirs Festival (see News, p.12), we have a pair of tickets to give away for John Scott Whiteley's Celebrity Organ Recital in Gloucester Cathedral at 2pm on 29 July, which includes the world premiere of MacMillan's *Toccata*; quote code 'GLOUCESTER'. **NB: Offer closes on Friday 19 July.**
- At the Edinburgh International Festival, Harry Christophers conducts The Sixteen, Genesis Sixteen and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra in the world premiere of MacMillan's Fifth Symphony, *Le grand inconnu* (8pm, Usher Hall) (see News, p.11). Courtesy of the EIF, we have a pair of tickets to give away; quote code 'EDINBURGH' (Offer ends 31 July).

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MAGGIE HAMILTON

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on 19 July with St James' Baroque, directed by James O'Donnell. The finals of both Interpretation and Improvisation competitions, and the prizegiving, take place the following evening.

Courtesy of St Albans IOF, we have a pair of tickets to give away for either the Concerto Final on 19 July, or the Interpretation and Improvisation finals and prizegiving on 20 July; quote code 'FINALS' and indicate your preferred date.

NB: Offer ends Friday 12 July.

COMPETITION ENTRIES

To apply for any of these offers, send your name and address on a postcard to John Barnett, C&O July/August 2019 draw, Mark Allen Group, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Rd, Brixton, London SE24 0PB, UK, or email offers@rhinegold.co.uk; please make sure to quote the relevant 'CODE'.

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Tested by fire

This summer, Selby Abbey's celebrity organ recital series features Philippe Lefebvre, titular organist of Notre-Dame de Paris. Preparations for his visit to the UK were interrupted by the devastating fire at the cathedral. **Graeme Kay** spoke to him shortly afterwards. PHOTOS COURTESY SELBY ABBEY

On the night of 15 April – Monday of Holy Week – the lives of Notre-Dame organists Johann Vexo, Olivier Latry, Vincent Dubois and Philippe Lefebvre were turned upside down. Choir organist Vexo, who was playing to a congregation of about 200 at the 6pm Mass in the cathedral when the fire broke out, was among the first to be evacuated when, 10 to 15 minutes into

the service, a smoke alarm went off. Vexo went home, not knowing if there was a real fire. He later told the France 24 website: 'I feel like an orphan. Not only have I been separated from my instrument, I've also been separated from Notre-Dame. It's hard to imagine that I am not going to be able to set foot in the cathedral where I have spent so much time working and performing these last 15 years.'

Vexo has been particularly unlucky – Philippe Lefebvre confirmed that the Choir organ had sustained a lot of water damage. But incredibly, the Grand-Orgue has survived, not exactly unscathed, but with the worst fears of the world's onlookers and friends of the music and musicians of Notre-Dame confounded.

'Organ builders appointed by the Ministry of Culture have visited the gallery ▶

▼ Philippe Lefebvre at the Manchester console in Selby Abbey in 2017, with Christopher Too; in his recital, Lefebvre improvised a five-movement, 26-minute symphony



‘organ,’ Lefebvre explained. ‘The organ has been completely saved. It is affected by dust and soot, but nothing is broken, no water got in. We are waiting for electricity to be restored to the organ so that we can test the action. At the moment we see no need to remove it, and we are hoping that it will require only cleaning and tuning.’

Independent reports suggested that the temperature in that part of the cathedral did not exceed 17 degrees Celsius, which would indicate little danger to the soft metal of the pipework.

‘We will probably build something to cover the organ,’ Lefebvre added. ‘It is better if it stays in, is protected, and is played during the rebuilding work – the best thing is to play it. Subject to the architects’ advice, if the nave is tackled first, we could be open and resume services in three years.’

Lefebvre expresses cautious optimism about the future. Although the Choir Organ is damaged, the music library itself was housed elsewhere. There is talk of erecting a temporary structure in the

square in front of the Cathedral, so that services can continue on the spot as soon as possible.

Such optimism is boosted by the waves of international support which greeted the disaster. In no sense do Lefebvre and his colleagues feel they will be redundant at the Cathedral and forced to fill their schedules with concerts and deputising. In Holy Week, says Lefebvre, services were transferred to other churches – ‘after all, it was Easter’ – and if the plan for a temporary building goes ahead, it will have an organ.

Vexo himself was first out of the traps – within days of the fire he was playing a benefit concert at the Basilica of the National Shrine in Washington DC.

It is ironic that Lefebvre’s Selby concert is in aid of the Abbey’s own Roof Appeal, although it has probably occurred to the Selby organisers that the proceeds might be split, or entirely re-assigned to Paris.

Lefebvre has been a frequent visitor to the UK. After taking some courses with his Notre-Dame predecessor Pierre Cochereau, on the latter’s advice he went to study with Jeanne Jouain at the Lille Conservatory, later becoming a prize-winning student at the Paris Conservatoire. He won the Improvisation Prize at the 1973 Chartres Competition, and was titular organist at Chartres before moving to Notre-Dame in 1985. He was director of the Lille Conservatoire for 24 years and returned to the Paris Conservatoire for a 12-year stint as professor of improvisation.

Naturally, Lefebvre will perform an improvisation in Selby, and relishes the qualities which English organs offer by contrast to French organs with their fiery reeds: ‘I love this church. For me, English organs are very special because of their foundation stops which are wider, with a very warm sound. These organs are more orchestral, ideally voiced for accompanying the choir. You have these beautiful tutti on the Swell, with pent-up power, yet not so much as to overwhelm the choir. This is very different.’ ■

Graeme Kay is a former editor of Classical Music, Opera Now and BBC Music magazines. He is a digital platforms producer for BBC Radio 3 and 4.

Selby Abbey Organ Recitals

In celebration of the 950th anniversary of Selby Abbey, which was founded in 1069 by Benedict of Auxerre, Selby Abbey Trust has arranged a series of free 2019 Celebrity Organ Recitals to be performed on the historic William Hill organ from the nave console. The retiring collection will be in aid of Selby Abbey 950 Anniversary Roof Appeal. All recitals are on Tuesday lunchtimes, beginning at 12.30pm.

2 July: Roger Tebbit (Selby Abbey)

9 July: Richard Elliott (principal organist, Mormon Tabernacle)

16 July: Geoffrey Coffin (York)

23 July: Murray Forbes Somerville (former organist and choir master, Harvard University)

30 July: Nathan Laube (Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY)

6 August: Philippe Lefebvre (Organiste titulaire, Notre-Dame de Paris)

Selby Abbey’s 950th Anniversary Concert will be held on 6 September, with Benjamin Frith (piano), D’Arcy Trinkwon (organ) and Manchester Camerata directed by Terence Frazor in a programme of Beethoven, Litolff and Saint-Saens. Tickets £12-£25 from the Abbey shop or Appeal Office, The Rose House, Wykeham, Old Malton, North Yorkshire YO17 6RF



Selby Abbey Organ

The early history of Selby Abbey's organ points to an 1825 installation by the Manchester firm of Renn & Boston. Subsequent work was done by Booth, Forster & Andrews, and Conacher. But the organ that was to become famous was built in 1909 by Wm. Hill & Son of London, following a fire which started in the previous organ (a 1906 53-stop John Compton rebuild of an 1891 Binns) and largely destroyed the Abbey. The 58-stop tubular-pneumatic organ was housed in a matched pair of cases designed by John Oldrid Scott.

Paul Hale writes: After a superb 1950 rebuild by Hill, Norman & Beard (HNB), in 1955 the console was moved to its present position on the north side of the chancel, which heralded the period of the organ's greatest fame – a fame resulting from a series of spectacular recordings by Fernando Germani, recordings which have a devoted following to this day. Franck, Reger, Frescobaldi, Widor, Liszt – all were recorded during 1962-63 and issued by EMI on three long-playing records. For many of my generation, Germani's recording of the three Franck Chorals and Reger's *Hallelujah! Gott zu loben* were definitive performances which inspired and informed our youthful attempts to play these great works.

Despite the fame of the Selby organ spreading far and wide following these wonderful recordings, changes – reflecting 'neo-baroque' leanings – were made to the organ from the mid-1960s to the 1990s. Some 60 years after the 1950 rebuild, it became clear that similarly major work needed carrying out to the organ once more, and the contract was undertaken by Principal Pipe Organs (York), led by Geoffrey Coffin.

Tonally, it was considered that something of a return to the organ that Germani knew was the most appropriate route, without entirely dispensing with some useful later registers. The Choir organ was re-enclosed and refashioned as a smaller Swell organ, as the immense power of Hill's Swell reeds overwhelms a choir; given back to the Solo were some of the romantic colours removed in the 1960s/70s, the



smaller Pedal pipework was moved to better positions, rebalanced and revoiced, and derivations from the manuals were reconsidered and improved.

It was possible to add a nave console when the Harrison & Harrison console from Manchester Cathedral – dating from 1950, the same year as the Abbey's own HNB console – became available. It has an historic significance of its own: when the organist of Manchester Cathedral, Norman Cocker, designed this console with curved stop jambs (perhaps influenced by his 'other job' as a cinema organist), it was the first console built with curved jambs by

H&H; on a visit to their Durham factory on Royal Festival Hall business, Ralph Downes spotted this console being made and immediately asked H&H to build the RFH console, also with curved jambs. And so organ history was made!

Paul Hale is emeritus cathedral organist and Rector Chori of Southwell Minster; as an independent organ adviser he has worked as consultant on numerous projects, including Selby Abbey. His most recent project is the restoration of Southampton University's 1977 Peter Collins organ, now successfully installed in Orford Church, Suffolk.



Norway spruce

A combination of perfect blend, impeccable intonation and articulation, and freshness of tone has won awards for the Norwegian Soloists' Choir. **Clare Stevens** reports

▲ The Norwegian Soloists' Choir: their 'pure, flexible sound combines ethereal youthfulness with skill and control'

We who were born by the sea
Where we live doesn't matter
There's always a wind blows round our house
We wake up with salt on our tongue
Our paths pass over steep cliffs
And we're always fighting the storm

It would be hard to find a better illustration of what makes Det Norske Solistkor (The Norwegian Soloists' Choir) a very special vocal ensemble than their performance of the brief but hugely atmospheric settings by the contemporary Norwegian composer Alfred Janson (b.1937) of three poems by the Swedish writer Ebba Lindqvist

(1908-95), which open their recent recording of Janson's music. The words above are taken from the second song, and they are immaculately interpreted by the choir, whose pure, flexible sound combines ethereal youthfulness with skill and control, vividly evoking the flinty bleakness of the Scandinavian landscape. No wonder this CD was a *Gramophone* magazine Editor's Choice for 2018: paying tribute to the skill, imagination and power of Janson's music, which he believes was unfairly neglected for most of the composer's life but which is showcased for a new audience by the recording, critic Andrew Mellor rightly praised the choir for its exquisite blend, perfect intonation and superlative articulation.



repertoire with performances that are superbly disciplined yet conversational in style, full of light and shade, and characterised again by the choir's light, fresh tone which can suddenly bloom into rich maturity.

Nystedt (1915-2014) founded the Solistkor in 1950. He was a composer who had studied in the US with Aaron Copland as well as in Oslo with Bjarne Brustad, and one of his aims in establishing the semi-professional choir, at the invitation of the Norwegian Soloists' Society, was to give himself a vehicle for performing contemporary music – his own and other people's – that was beyond the reach of other Norwegian vocal ensembles.

As a child Nystedt was a member of the 'Olavsgutten' ('Olav's Boys') boys' choir; he went on to accompany the choir on tour and to sing tenor or bass in oratorio choirs conducted by Arild Sandvold, stating in his memoirs that the greatest

'I like the unexpected, putting a contemporary piece straight after a more classical piece, and letting them talk to each other'

experience of his musical life was taking part in a *St Matthew Passion* conducted by Sandvold in 1937. He supported his career as a composer by conducting both amateur and professional choirs and orchestras, including the Oslo Philharmonic and teaching piano; but he was also a committed church musician who grew up attending the Bethlehem mission church, where his father, an amateur violinist, conducted the choir. Nystedt himself experienced an evangelical conversion at a revivalist meeting for which he was playing the organ. This was strengthened when he conducted a choir of 1,000 singers from all the Christian congregations in Oslo during a rally addressed by the US preacher Billy Graham. Thereafter, Nystedt became particularly inspired by the Book of Revelation and its visions of a new heaven and a new earth, which provided a theme that ran through many of his compositions for the rest of his life. Digital scans of Nystedt's personal scrapbooks have been uploaded to his website, documenting his 40 years at the helm of the Solistkor through correspondence and press cuttings. The many honours bestowed on him for his services to music included the music prize of Arts Council Norway in 1980 and the award of Commander of St Olav from the King of Norway in 2002.

Exploring the members' own musical heritage is an important part of the Solistkor's remit, which conductor Grete Pedersen has developed since taking over its artistic direction in 1990 from its first conductor, Knut Nystedt. But they are not just specialists in Norwegian or even Scandinavian music: last November, French magazine *Diapason* awarded their CD of J.S. Bach's six motets, recorded in 2017 with Ensemble Allegria, the Diapason d'Or ('Golden Tuning Fork') for best choral CD, comparing it favourably with specialist ensembles such as the Monteverdi Choir and Bach Collegium Japan. This was richly deserved, as the Solistkor manages to bring something new to the familiar

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△ Taking over from this distinguished figure after his long tenure, Grete Pedersen has consolidated his legacy rather than taking the Solistkor in a strikingly different direction. Four clear strands can be identified in the choir's concert performances and recording catalogue: the music of the Norwegian Lutheran church, which was so important to Nystedt; contemporary music, particularly from Scandinavian and Baltic countries; the Norwegian folk tradition; and standard international choral repertoire, both a cappella and orchestral, in which the Solistkor sets the national standard.

The choir engages 26 professionally trained, hand-picked singers, all of whom are potential soloists in their respective genres, on time-limited contracts, a model which allows the number of singers to be varied according to the repertoire of a particular project. 'This gives both flexibility and stability, and permits the choir to achieve its overall object at all times: the best possible musical results,' says Pedersen. Its youthful membership profile means the singers are receptive to and willing to perform newly written works, and also contributes to the freshness of its sound. The choir performs in Norway and around the world, at venues ranging from concert halls and churches to ball rooms and bus garages.

Norway does not have a tradition of professional choirs, but one of Pedersen's early ambitions was to ensure that her singers would be paid for their work on similar terms to professional instrumentalists: 'We do now have quite a lot of money from the state and from the festivals that engage us to perform, but funding our activities is always hard work. There's nothing new about that, though; Bach and Handel used to complain about not being able to afford winter clothes for their musicians! It's our responsibility to be the caretakers of our music, and work hard at maintaining relationships with people in the government so that they continue to support us.'

The choir is remarkable for its technical fluency and the apparent ease with which the singers surmount the challenges of taxing repertoire such as the Bruckner Te Deum, which they performed at the Oslo International Festival of Church Music earlier this year; so it comes as something of a surprise to discover that Pedersen's own musical background is primarily as an instrumentalist rather than as a singer, apart from a few years with the (amateur) choir of Oslo Cathedral. But she did start learning the piano very young and by the age of five was accompanying psalms at the Sunday School attached to the free evangelical church attended by her family in Moss, 60km south of Oslo. She continued to play



TN AT NORWEGIAN WIKIPEDIA



OLE KALAND

in church and accompany choirs throughout her youth, which she says was very good training for her future career as a choral conductor.

As a schoolgirl Pedersen loved sport and music equally; she pursued both as far as possible before the difficult choice had to be made. There can't be many musicians whose alternative careers would have been as professional footballers; among that elite band is Pedersen, who admits that her final match as a member of the Norwegian national team was a women's world cup victory over England, in which she scored a goal. Working as a church organist, she faced the usual conflict between Sunday activities: 'I used to play the voluntaries very fast so that I could run to football!' ▷

▲ The choir's founder-conductor was the Norwegian composer Knut Nystedt, who wanted to perform contemporary music not normally accessible to Norwegian choirs

▲ Grete Pedersen took up the baton from Nystedt in 1990: 'It's our responsibility to be the caretakers of our music'

NORWEGIAN SOLOISTS' CHOIR

She graduated in church music from the Norwegian Academy of Music (NAM) and also studied orchestral conducting with the US conductor Kenneth Kiesler, and choral conducting with Terje Kvam in Oslo and Eric Ericson in Stockholm. In 1984 she founded the Oslo Chamber Choir, remaining its conductor until 2004. She is now professor of choral conducting at the NAM and a frequent guest conductor with professional choirs around the world, including the BBC Singers, the Bavarian Radio Choir and Chamber Choir Ireland. But since 1990 her main focus has been her work as artistic director and conductor of the Norwegian Soloists' Choir.

A major attraction in taking on the role was the choir's reputation for performing contemporary music, she says. 'For example, I was thinking we could do one of Ligeti's early choral works, and I looked in the library and found the choir had performed it in 1960. The repertoire hasn't really changed since Nystedt's time, but because young singers today are now so much more skilled than

▼ 'Young singers today are much more skilled than they were in the past'

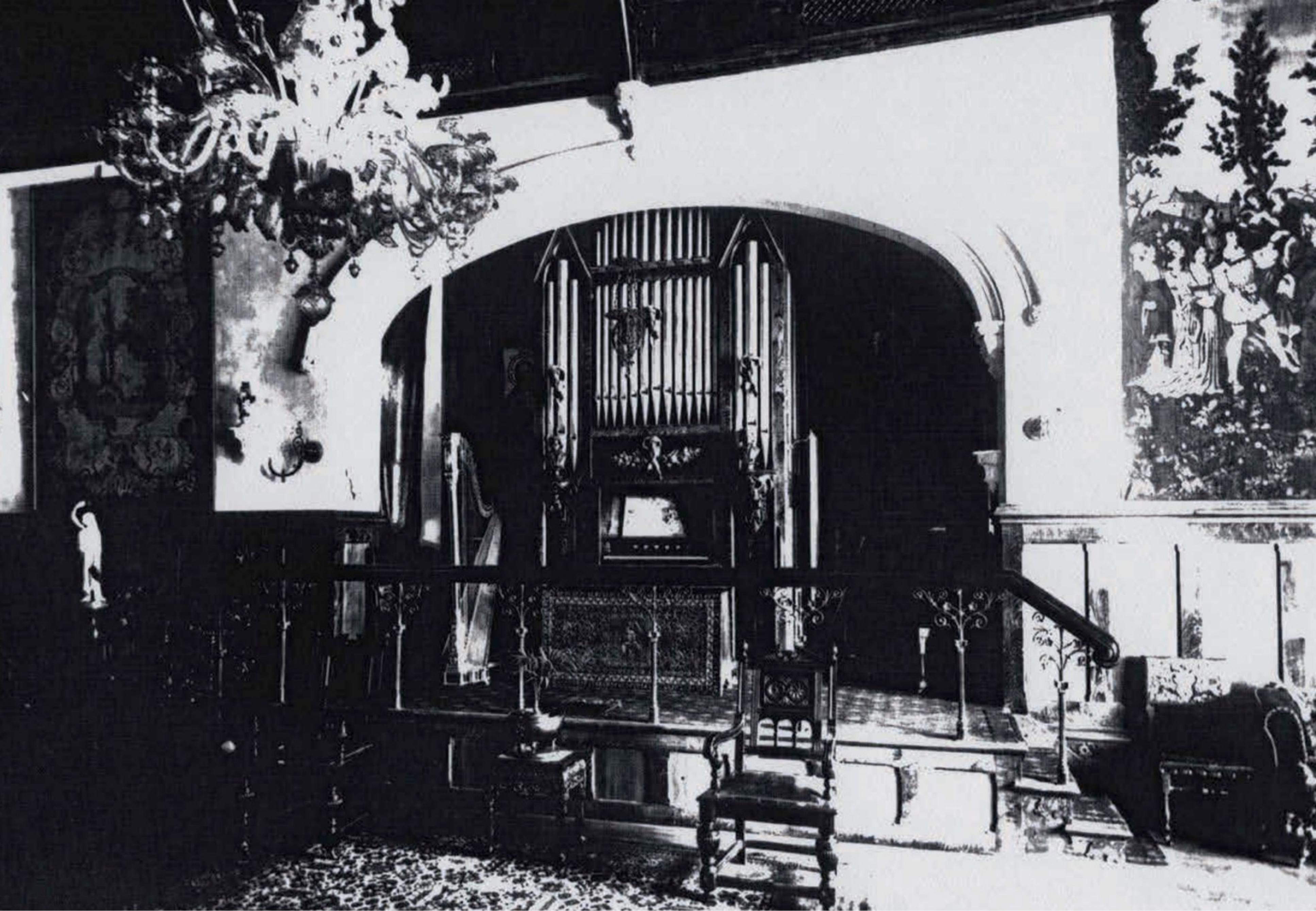
they were in the past, we can work more quickly. I like the unexpected, putting a contemporary piece straight after a more classical piece, and letting them talk to each other. For example, Helmut Lachenmann works really well with Haydn. I often feel we should be doing more for contemporary composers, but there's always a balance to be struck.'

In recent years the average age of the choir has been getting younger and younger, although Pedersen also likes to use some really experienced singers: 'I try to have a combination, and I want them all to approach every concert as though they are singing this music for the very first time. Our responsibility is to deliver it in the very best and most heartfelt way we can: it's not just another day at work – if that's how anyone thinks, they should find another job.' www.solistkoret.no ■

Clare Stevens works as a writer, editor and publicist in the Welsh Marches, where she sings with Hereford Choral Society.



YNGVE OLSEN SÆBEE



▲ Chamber organ built by George Fincham (1888) for the Gothic-style baronial hall of 'Tudor Lodge' in Hawthorn, the residence of interior decorator Cullis Hill. The instrument has since vanished

Home page

An organ for a cricketer is just one of those **John Maidment** considers in his survey of chamber organs in Victoria, Australia. PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOHN MAIDMENT

part 2 Late 19th-century organs

From the 1860s, pipe organs increasingly became symbols of domestic prestige, and those who owned them were often very wealthy. Houses were sometimes built with the organ as their focal point. Both British and local organ builders were commissioned to build these instruments.

William Philpott (1818-91) was a leading cricketer as well as an organist,

and must have made considerable money as a stock and station agent, wool broker and auctioneer. In 1865, Philpott (who had earlier bought a chamber organ built by John Courcelle for his private chapel nearby) commissioned a three-manual organ of 26 stops from London organ builder J.W. Walker for the music room of his home, 'Rose Hill', in the Melbourne suburb of Toorak. This was a very

comprehensive instrument with 14 ranks of upper work and built to the highest standards. It must have occupied a very large room, but no photographs of the house exist.

The organ was sold and moved to St Stephen's Church, Richmond in 1869, and apart from some small additions to the Choir Organ by Fincham, it survives almost completely unscathed; ▷

‘Rose Hill’, residence of William Philpott, Toorak;
now at St Stephen’s Church, Richmond, Victoria

J.W. WALKER, LONDON (1865)



| GREAT | | CHOIR |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Bourdon | 16 | (originally unenclosed) |
| Open Diapason | 8 | Keraulophon |
| Gamba (flared) | 8 | Stop'd Diapason |
| Stop'd Diapason | 8 | Harmonique Flute |
| Principal | 4 | Concert Flute |
| Wald Flute | 4 | Flageolet |
| Twelfth | 2 ^{2/3} | |
| Fifteenth | 2 | |
| Sesquialtra (15.19.22) | III | |
| Trumpet | 8 | |
| <i>Swell to Great</i> | | |
| <i>Octave to Great</i> | | |
| SWELL | | PEDAL |
| Bourdon | 16 | Open Diapason |
| Open Diapason | 8 | Bourdon |
| Stop'd Diapason | 8 | <i>Great to Pedal</i> |
| Principal | 4 | <i>Swell to Pedal</i> |
| Piccolo | 2 | <i>Choir to Pedal</i> |
| Twelfth & Fifteenth | 2 ^{2/3} & 2 | |
| Mixture (15.19.22.26.29) | V | |
| Cornopean | 8 | |
| Oboe | 8 | |
| | | <i>Compass: 56/30</i> |
| | | <i>Mechanical key and stop action</i> |
| | | <i>Attached drawstop console</i> |
| | | <i>6 composition pedals</i> |
| | | <i>A Dulciana (1890), Vox Angelica (1908) and Clarionet (1890) were later added to the Choir organ, which was enclosed.</i> |

R.S. Stacey, Euston Road, London, brought to Victoria by A.H. Whinfield

HILL & SON, LONDON (1871), JOB NUMBER 1372

GREAT

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Open Diapason (grooved bass) | 8 |
| Lieblich Gedact | 8 |
| <i>Swell to Great</i> | |

SWELL

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Pierced Gamba (grooved bass) | 8 |
| Suabe Flute (t.c) | 4 |

PEDAL

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Bourdon (added later) | 16 |
| <i>Great to Pedal</i> | |

Compass: 56/30
Mechanical key and stop action
Trigger swell lever



its restoration was completed this year. It is one of the finest examples of an early Walker organ anywhere that remains substantially intact, and has an outstanding sound. Although built for residential use, the scales and voicing of the pipework are exactly what would have been employed for a church organ. It is interesting that when the organ was being sold, an unsuccessful bid was made for the organ from the municipal authorities in Hobart, who subsequently ordered a new town hall organ from Walker's with exactly the stops that were found on Philpott's instruments, but with several important additions.

George Fincham (1828-1910) built a number of chamber organs after he started his business in Melbourne in 1864. Fincham had worked for both Bevington's and Bishop's in London before his emigration in 1852; and in 1880 he constructed his *magnum opus*, of four manuals and 70 stops, for the Melbourne

'Findon', Kew, residence of The Hon. Henry Miller; now at Wesley Uniting Church, Box Hill, Victoria

HENRY WILLIS, LONDON (1877)

GREAT

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Open Diapason | 8 |
| Claribel Flute | 8 |
| Dulciana | 8 |
| Principal | 4 |



Flute Harmonique

4

Fifteenth

2

Corno di Bassetto

8

Swell to Great

SWELL

Lieblich Bourdon

16

Open Diapason

8

Lieblich Gedact

8

Salicional

8

Vox Angelica (t.c.)

8

Gemshorn

4

Flageolet

2

Hautboy

8

PEDAL

Bourdon Pedale

16

Flute Pedale

8

Great to Pedal

Swell to Pedal

Compass: 58/30

Mechanical key and stop action

5 composition pedals

Exhibition. There are two early Fincham chamber organs surviving, one now in a Melbourne suburban church, its case incorporating two fretwork panels – it originally had a Trumpet from tenor C which was later replaced by a Flute. Another example, which dates from around 1874, may now be found at Dunkeld, Victoria. It includes a blackwood case (a local timber) and all of the metal pipework is of spotted metal, including the Dulciana 8ft, which is placed in the façade. This was restored in 2017 for a former church which is now known as 'Fincham Hall'. Fincham was to build other chamber organs, some practice instruments, but others such as an 1888 instrument for interior decorator Cullis Hill's residence, 'Tudor Lodge' in Hawthorn, which sat in an alcove in a Gothic-style baronial hall. It has since vanished.

In 1877, the famed Henry Willis was commissioned to build a substantial two-manual 17-stop organ for the

ballroom of 'Findon', Kew, the residence of the Hon. Henry Miller ('Money Miller' – the wealthiest man in Victoria) – the only example of Willis's 19th-century work in Victoria. This was a lavish example of his construction with solid ivory drawstops, stencilled façade pipes, carved casework and all of the internal metal pipes above 4ft of spotted metal. The voicing of the instrument is exquisite, particularly the Corno di Bassetto, one of his specialities. This instrument survives almost completely unaltered and was placed in its present location in a church at Box Hill, a suburb of Melbourne, in 1929. The mechanical action, made from mahogany, was restored some years back.

Around 1880, Robert Sperring commissioned an organ for his home in Essendon, a north-western suburb of Melbourne. Local organ builder William Anderson had taken as a 'trade-in' a single-manual J.W. Walker organ of 1855 from Christ Church, Hawthorn when

Private client, Melbourne; now at 'Fincham Hall', Dunkeld, Victoria

GEORGE FINCHAM,
MELBOURNE (c.1874)

Open Diapason

8

(1-12 from Bourdon, unoriginal
treble replaced with Fincham pipes)

Stopd Diap Bass (CC-BB)

8

Clarabella (t.c.)

8

Dulciana (full compass)

8

Vox Angelica (t.c.)

8

(unoriginal Gamba replaced with
Fincham pipes)

Dulcet

4

Flute (t.c.) (open wood)

4

Piccolo

2

(open wood, metal top octave)

Pedal coupler

PEDAL

Bourdon

16

Compass: 56/29

Mechanical key and stop action

Trigger swell lever

*Attached drawstop console behind
sliding doors*



‘Rippon Lea’, residence of Sir Frederick Sargood, Elsternwick, Victoria; now at Uniting Church, Semaphore, SA

PETER CONACHER & CO., HUDDERSFIELD (1882)



| GREAT | | CHOIR | |
|--------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------|----|
| Lieblich Bourdon | 16 | (unenclosed) | |
| Open Diapason | 8 | Violin | 8 |
| Stopped Diapason | 8 | Dulciana | 8 |
| Pierced Gamba | 8 | Flûte à Cheminée | 4 |
| Principal | 4 | Stopped Piccolo | 2 |
| Harmonic Piccolo | 2 | <i>Swell to Choir</i> | |
| <i>Swell to Great</i> | | | |
| SWELL | | PEDAL | |
| Violin Diapason (grooved bass) | 8 | Bourdon | 16 |
| Stopped Diapason | 8 | Flute | 8 |
| Salicional (grooved bass) | 8 | <i>Great to Pedal</i> | |
| Voix Célestes (t.c.) | 8 | <i>Swell to Pedal</i> | |
| Gemshorn | 4 | <i>Choir to Pedal</i> | |
| Harmonic Flute | 4 | <i>Compass: 56/30</i> | |
| Hautbois | 8 | <i>Mechanical key and stop action</i> | |
| <i>Tremulant</i> | | <i>Attached drawstop console</i> | |

‘Noorilim’, residence of William Winter-Irving, Armadale, Victoria; now at Christ Church Anglican Church, Hamilton

CASSON’S PATENT ORGAN COMPANY, LONDON (1892)

| GREAT | | SWELL PEDALIER | |
|------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|
| Open Diapason | 8 | Bourdon | 16 |
| Claribel | 8 | Bass Flute | 8 |
| Dulciana | 8 | <i>Swell to Pedal</i> | |
| Principal | 4 | <i>Pedal Help</i> | |
| Flauto Traverso | 4 | <i>Mechanical action</i> | |
| <i>Swell to Great</i> | | | |
| SWELL | | | |
| Harmonic Flute | 8 | | |
| Viole d’Orchestre | 8 | | |
| Viole Celeste (t.c.) | 8 | | |
| Echo Salicional | 8 | | |
| Salicet | 4 | | |
| Flautino | 2 | | |
| Trumpet | 8 | | |
| <i>Swell to Octave</i> | | | |
| <i>Vibrato</i> | | | |
| GREAT PEDALIER | | | |
| Bourdon | 16 | | |
| Flauto Dolce | 8 | | |
| <i>Great to Pedal</i> | | | |
| <i>Pedal Help</i> | | | |



He installed a new Alfred Hunter organ in 1876. Anderson enlarged this organ initially to two manuals, as a photograph at the State Library of Victoria attests. Then a third manual was added when it was placed in the billiard room of Sperring’s home, ‘Tooronga’, completed in 1889. Two photographs exist of it here, but the organ was advertised for sale in 1894 (maybe Sperring had fallen on hard times during the financial depression) and it simply vanished; not even a specification exists. Other organs have disappeared from private residences, such as architect E.G. Kilburn’s substantial two-manual in the billiard room of his Brighton home ‘The Elms’, and a diminutive two-manual at ‘Woodcliff’, the home of William Wood, an optometrist, also of Brighton.

Sir Frederick Sargood commissioned in 1882 a three-manual instrument from Peter Conacher & Co., of Huddersfield, for his mansion ‘Rippon Lea’, Elsternwick, in suburban Melbourne, the building surviving in National Trust ownership and noted for its splendid gardens. This superbly constructed instrument, with pipework divided on either side of the central console, was initially placed in



Freestyle BY GRAEME KAY

Going Dutch. And when is an ovation not an ovation?

the dining room and then the ballroom before being moved in 1902 to a suburban church in Adelaide, South Australia, where it survives unaltered. It includes some exquisite examples of voicing, such as the Choir Violin, whose basses are fitted with *freins harmoniques* to stabilise the speech. It is unknown why Sargood commissioned this organ from a regional English firm, but he was living in Britain in 1881 and must have become acquainted with its work.

A final 19th-century import, in 1892, was an organ for grazier and politician William Winter-Irving's Melbourne mansion 'Noorilim' in Armadale – this was his second organ, the first being his Courcelle organ at Nagambie, Victoria. The 1892 organ came from Casson's Patent Organ Company, London, and incorporated the first narrow-scale strings to be found in the country (Viole d'Orchestre, Viole Celeste, Echo Salicional and Salicet), probably voiced by William Thynne – these ranks were to be widely emulated by local organ builders. This instrument found its way to a church at Hamilton, in Victoria's Grampians region, where it has since been rebuilt, although all the original pipework survives.

In 1897, Arthur Whinfield advertised for sale a Hill & Son practice organ that had been built in 1871 for R.S. Stacey, London. Whinfield was in Victoria from 1889-97 before he returned to England, where he was to become managing director of Nicholson & Co., organ builders, in Worcester. This tiny two-manual instrument of five stops survives in private ownership and is a rare example of its builder's work in this genre, including Hill's signature ranks – Pierced Gamba and Suabe Flute. ■

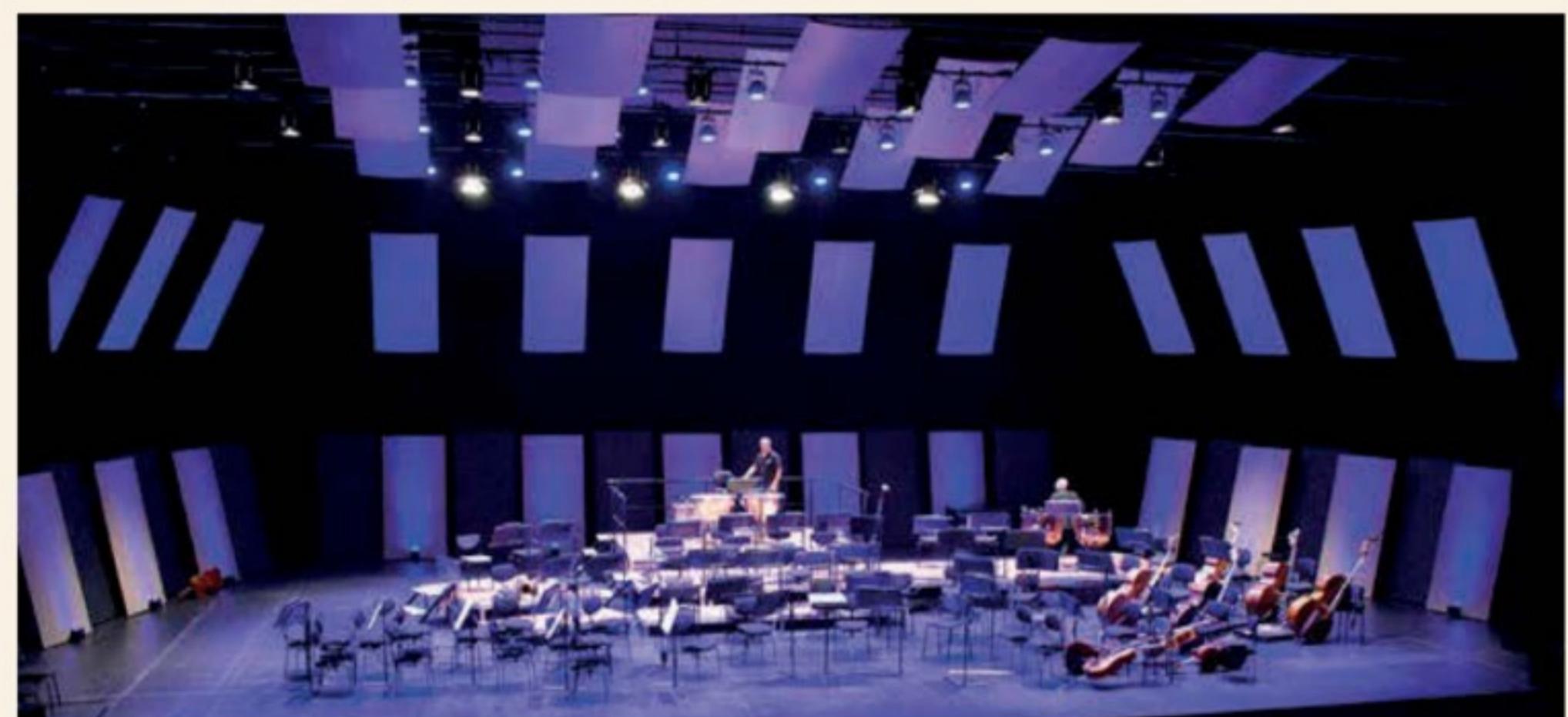
John Maidment was the co-founder and chairman of the Organ Historical Trust of Australia. He initiated the production of a series of gazetteers of organs in Australia and has written and advised widely on the subject.

► NEXT ISSUE

Part 3: Some opulent organs built during the Edwardian period

When visiting the Netherlands (see p.66) my preferred route is via the overnight ferry from Harwich to Hoek van Holland and onwards by train. As I approached Dutch passport control, owing to the presence of several coach parties of tourists from far-flung lands, there were over 100 people in the 'non-EU passports' queue and only one person ahead of me in the 'EU passports' line. Passing through in a matter of moments, I reflected that, barring a major upheaval, in a few months' time the UK will have 'taken back control', and, standing proud in our re-asserted sovereignty, we will once more assume the position some have chosen for us – right at the back of the queue.

Amsterdam may be one of the world's most attractive destinations, but, like Venice, it is permanently crowded – the scourge of the cruise-line behemoths looms over even this great maritime city, and hotel accommodation for those not returning to a floating stateroom can cost double the equivalent in less sought-after places. So I stayed in The Hague, only an hour away by train, and – at least in the old town – a haven of tranquillity, with a remarkable Rembrandt exhibition only a short walk away.



GRAEME KAY

▲ Inside the Zuiderstrandtheater

On my free evening I took the electric bus down to the harbour at Scheveningen to hear the Residentie Orkest performing Brahms's First Piano Concerto and Beethoven's Seventh Symphony to a large audience in the newish Zuiderstrandtheater. The concert began with the latest product of a scheme run by the orchestra in collaboration with the Royal Conservatoire: composition students take to the streets to make contact with someone living in The Hague and write a 'One-Minute Symphony' based on their encounter. The young American Wesley Traeger's interviewee was Romania's ambassador, Brândușa Predescu. Ms Predescu spoke to him from the heart about what it was like to be a student in the run-up to the fall of Communism in 1989, and how she took refuge in art and literature. A proud European, she was on fire with enthusiasm for Romania's journey to joining the EU and taking up the current EU presidency.

For the audience, the trek to the theatre-by-the-beach was rewarded with a free programme, coffee and an interval drink. The punters in turn greeted the performers with automatic standing ovations foregone only by those of limited mobility. I found this slightly disconcerting: while London theatres are currently suffering from a plague of unmerited ovations and the infantile vocalisations of those whom the writer Howard Jacobson drily but accurately observes as having been to 'Whooping School', the Dutch audience could never be accused of indulging in ostentatious virtue-signalling. So what do they do when confronted by a performance which truly deserves a stander? ■

Graeme Kay is a digital platforms producer for BBC Radio 3 and 4.



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NEW MUSIC

Kerensa Briggs

Light in Darkness

For solo organ

Kerensa Briggs talks to **Shirley Ratcliffe** about the relationship between music and transcendence, and how it is realised in her work

Like so many young composers aiming to make their way, Kerensa Briggs spends her time singing, teaching and writing music. An experienced singer, she developed her love of sacred music singing in the Gloucester Cathedral Youth Choir and in the choirs of King's College, London, and Trinity College, Cambridge. When I ask why she chose composition as her primary study, she replies humorously and with engaging frankness, 'I was never very good at performing so I thought it might be better to write for other people!' But there is no doubting her very serious intent as she explains, 'I was exposed to a lot of music in my childhood as both my parents are very musical, and this inevitably had an effect on my relationship with music. I enjoyed composing when I was young, and chose composition as a principal study primarily for a sheer love of sound and the effect it can have on us. I loved hearing the music of the great composers, and wanted to try to learn how they did it.' She finds balancing multiple priorities difficult, which makes her push herself; but the end result is worth it.

Kerensa Briggs follows the advice of her tutors by listening to as much music as possible. In terms of musical influences, she says, 'I don't feel my writing adheres to any particular "school of composition." I love discovering music that is harmonically provocative, and I'm becoming increasingly interested in polyharmony. I'm always interested in new music that has been influenced by the ancient. Some choral, or choir and organ



▲ Kerensa Briggs: 'I chose composition for a sheer love of sound and the effect it can have on us'

favourites include Roxanna Panufnik's *Kyrie after Byrd*, Yves Castagnet's *Missa Salve Regina* and Gabriel Jackson's *I am the Rose of Sharon*. The end of Finzi's *Lo, the Full Final Sacrifice* is one of the most beautiful things ever written, so

I am subconsciously influenced by the assimilation of everything I have heard, and this is constantly changing. I think that influence can come from anything really, and that can happen in relation and reaction to the first note on the page.' ▷

1
Kerensa Briggs

Sw: Strings and flutes 8'
Gt: Foundations 8'
Ch: Strings and flutes 8'
Ped: 16', 8'
All manuals coupled
Sw/Gt, Ch/Gt, Sw/Ch

Light in darkness
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for the University of St Andrews

Reflective =80

Org. + Vox Humana 8'
Sw p + Tremulant

Ped.

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The world premiere of *Light in Darkness* will be given by Katelyn Emerson as part of St Andrews Organ Week on Thursday 1 August at 7.30pm in Lochee Parish Church.

Her inspiration derives from many sources, she explains: 'It's sounds, harmony, places, nature, feelings and responses to text – all sorts! Overall from "a sheer love of making sounds", as so perfectly summed up by Herbert Howells.'

Briggs's composing career had a very good start when she became joint winner (in the 19-25 years of age class) of the National Centre for Early Music Young Composer's Award 2014 with *Lamentations of Jeremiah: Jerusalem, return to the Lord thy God*, leading to a BBC Radio 3 broadcast with The Tallis Scholars – 'a great privilege.' The most performed of her pieces currently is the *Gloucester Service*. Commissioned by Gloucester Choral Society and Adrian Partington, it was performed at St Paul's Cathedral and has been recorded on Delphian Records with the Choir of King's College, London, for release in 2020; it will be performed at Gloucester as part of the Three Choirs

'The connection between music and transcendence has always fascinated me'

Festival on 28 July this year. 'The sound of the cathedral's expansive acoustics, the colours of the organ and the building itself definitely had a big influence on the nature of the piece,' she adds.

Briggs is not an organist, but her knowledge of the instrument comes from her father, renowned international organ recitalist David Briggs. 'One of my favourite things about listening to my father's organ improvisations is that he manages to get so many different colours and combinations of tone out of individual instruments. I have definitely learnt a lot about the possibilities of the instrument from my dad.'

It was her thoughtful interest in the Christian faith that prompted her to apply for the TheoArtistry project at St Andrews University in 2017, run in partnership with composer Sir James MacMillan. 'The connection between music and transcendence is something that I have

always found fascinating. I had also never experienced this type of collaborative working process before – the aim was that the theologian would influence musical experience and the composer would influence theological experience. It was great working with Dr Rebekah Dyer and the staff at the ITIA [Institute for Theology, Imagination and the Arts]. It was also interesting to experience a different way of working, and I very much enjoyed meeting and hearing the works of the other [five] composers on the project.'

Briggs explains how her C&O commission for an organ work for St Andrews University, *Light in Darkness*, proceeded with Dr Dyer: 'Rebekah initially suggested a few conceptual ideas for the piece, and looking at St John's Gospel the idea of "Light in Darkness" struck my interest. I wanted to explore the mystery and power of light when found within darkness. In John 1:4-5 *The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it*. The registration and quiet entry in the opening [of the piece]

reflects the idea of a shining light within darkness. Harmonic tension constantly builds in power as darkness intertwines with light. There is a final resolution as in 12:46, "I have come as light into the world, that whosoever believes in me may not remain in darkness." I wanted to create a piece that was practical to perform and something that was relatively accessible but interesting, and also a reflection upon the initial idea Rebekah had suggested.'

She explains her thinking behind the crescendos at the ends of phrases and, because the piece moves slowly, the pauses: 'Perhaps this is something to do with being a singer. I like having pauses between phrases to allow time and space to breath. I also imagine the ambience of the space in which the piece might be performed. The dynamics are used as an effect to emphasise particular sonorities.' ■

www.kerensabriggs.co.uk

INSIDE JOB

A new, purpose-built music centre for the University of St Andrews

The spring of 2020 will see the opening of the University of St Andrews's Laidlaw Music Centre, the first purpose-built music building in the University's 606 years of history. Until now, the music department has been housed in the 1920s Younger Hall; a combination of the Hall's lack of soundproofing, an increase in student and community demand for the Music Centre's facilities, and the commensurate increase in activity, made the commissioning of a new building essential. An initial gift from the legacy of Jean McPherson, alumna and lifelong supporter of Music in St Andrews, provided a vital impetus in the project's early stages.

University director of music Dr Michael Downes is excited at the prospect: 'More and more exceptionally talented musicians are choosing to come to St Andrews to make music while completing degrees in other disciplines. The spaces and facilities of the Laidlaw Music Centre will offer ideal conditions for them to develop their performance abilities.'

Following an international architectural competition, the University appointed Flanagan Lawrence to design the centre. The insights gained as a result of their much-praised building at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and Jason Flanagan's previous design work on the SAGE Gateshead for Norman Foster and Partners, have proved invaluable in evolving a building for St Andrews which maximises utility on a tightly restricted site. The appointment of Nicholas Edwards (Idibri) as venue and acoustical consultant led to the inclusion of a reverberation chamber in the ceiling of the largest space, the Jean McPherson Recital Room. Following on from similar chambers in Edwards's previous projects at Birmingham Symphony Hall and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's Meyerson Center among others, the McPherson



COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS



COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

▲ Architectural renderings of the new Laidlaw Centre, St Andrews University's first purpose-built music centre

Recital Room is perhaps the smallest space to which such a chamber has been appended. At last, St Andrews will have a room ideally suited for singing.

The recital room, with its adjustable acoustics and entirely flexible mechanical rostra floor, as well as its restored 1868 T.C. Lewis organ (II/15), will serve a variety of uses, from small-scale performances of all varieties to large scale orchestral rehearsals. It will also act as the new rehearsal studio for St Salvator's Chapel

Choir. In addition, three rehearsal rooms for small- to medium-sized ensembles and 10 smaller practice rooms will be complemented by a percussion studio and electronic/amplified music suite, as well as office accommodation and a reading room. Funding has come predominantly from philanthropic gifts, most notably from Baron Irvine Laidlaw of Rothiemay, after whom the building is named.

Chris Bragg, Concerts, Performance and Events Administrator, University of St Andrews

Every little bit helps

Building and maintaining pipe organs in churches can be a costly affair. **Alan Thurlow** introduces a charity that helps to defray some of the costs

It is probable that many C&O readers will have been involved at one stage of their life or another in raising funds to support work on a pipe organ. Some may even have had the thrill of raising the large sum required to build a new pipe organ. Pipe organs do not come cheap and, in the UK at least, rarely take high priority

in the budget of a church. From offshore Britain we tend to look in envy across the Channel at the church tax in Germany, or 'across the pond' at the music programmes maintained by many churches in the United States – though, even there, budgets seem increasingly under pressure in terms of organs and music.

This quaint story is the tale of a man who, concerned at the lack of funding available to provide grants for pipe organs in the British Isles, determined to do something about it. Of slight build, he was always immaculately turned out in a suit, collar and tie. His career had been as a teacher at a grammar school in the east end of London, and he led a simple and uncomplicated life. Organs and organ music were a lifelong passion. He served as organist at a church in Forest Gate, where he was active in bringing about the rebuilding of the organ; and he was also Parish Clerk at St Mary Abchurch in the City of London. In the early 1980s he was left a generous legacy by a relative. Having adequate means to fund his straightforward lifestyle, he decided to use the inheritance to found a charity with the sole purpose of making grants to churches towards work on pipe organs. The Charity Commission was content to register the new venture, but it required a name. Wanting no personal recognition for his philanthropy, the founder did not want to call it by his own name. However, being a teacher, he was used to seeing the name A.N. Other on team lists on school noticeboards. Inspired by this, he started to refer to himself as Mr A.N. On. When pressed for a name for his charity, he decided to call it the On Organ Fund.

The Fund he established was to be fully ecumenical, and open to applications from any church or place of worship in the British Isles. Grants would be available for any pipe organ, not restricted just to organs of historic significance. The On Organ Fund (OOF) formally came into existence in

◀ The Vincent Woodstock organ at St Mary and All Saints, Fotheringhay, received a special grant in memory of the On Organ Fund's founder and was adopted for the Fund's logo



ANDREWABBOTT

1984, its Trust Deed authorising the making of grants towards 'the installation, renewal, rebuilding, improvement, maintenance, preservation and restoration' of pipe organs, including 'the making of contributions to any fund for the purposes of acquiring or purchasing a pipe organ.' When the founder died in 1996, and being a bachelor with no immediate family, he bequeathed his own Estate to augment the capital of the Fund.

In its first 35 years, the On Organ Fund has become established as the only national charity that exists specifically for the purpose of helping to fund work on pipe organs. The Trustees' policy is to give small grants to all worthwhile applicants (which is the majority), rather than large grants to just a few. Though the grants may be a small percentage of the overall cost, the OOF has gained recognition as the only potential source of grant aid that a church can apply to with reasonable assurance that a grant will be forthcoming. The Fund retains its capital, with grants being awarded out of the investment income. When the accounts for the past financial year are received, the modest cost of running the charity is deducted from the investment income, the resultant figure determining the total grant money to be awarded during the current year. On a year-past basis the Trustees are thus able to demonstrate that all investment income, after running costs have been met, is passed on to churches as grants. All incoming donations and legacies are added to the capital, thus enabling the investment portfolio to grow year by year and gradually increase the sum available for grants. The formula has worked well for 35 years. By the end of 2019, and since the founding of the Fund, a total in excess of £350,000 will have been disbursed to over 900 churches, making an average grant of just under £400: a small contribution in most cases, but one which churches are very grateful to receive.

Mr On was a man of vision. At meetings he would speak of 'planting an acorn to grow an oak', expressing the hope that as the public became aware of the Fund and saw the potential for its growth, they would be encouraged to support it with their own donations and bequests, putting their money alongside his. As the capital gradually grows, the level of contribution



▲ The On Organ Fund trustees in 1991 were (l to r) Alan Thurlow, David Williams (secretary), Mr A.N. On, John Miley (treasurer) and Eric Tyson

COURTESY ALAN THURLOW



▲ St Leonard's, Hythe, was a recipient of a grant for F.H. Browne & Sons to carry out work on the church's three-manual Harrison & Harrison organ

COURTESY F.H. BROWNE

that the Fund can make to each church is likewise increasing. Operating the Fund in this way provides an assured and steadily growing source of annual income in perpetuity. At the front of the minutes book, in his characteristic and meticulous handwritten script, the founder wrote: 'It is the intention that from its small beginnings the On Organ Fund will be able to play an increasing role in giving support to organ

appeals throughout the British Isles.' In the longer term there is enormous potential for growth, and the present trustees – Alan Thurlow (chairman), Eric Tyson (treasurer), John Miley, William McVicker and Tom Bell – continue to run the Fund and work towards helping Mr On achieve his vision. ■

The On Organ Fund is a registered charity No.289160; www.onorganfund.org.uk

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▲ A team from Dobson Pipe Organ Builders installs a new organ for Merton College, Oxford, in 2013

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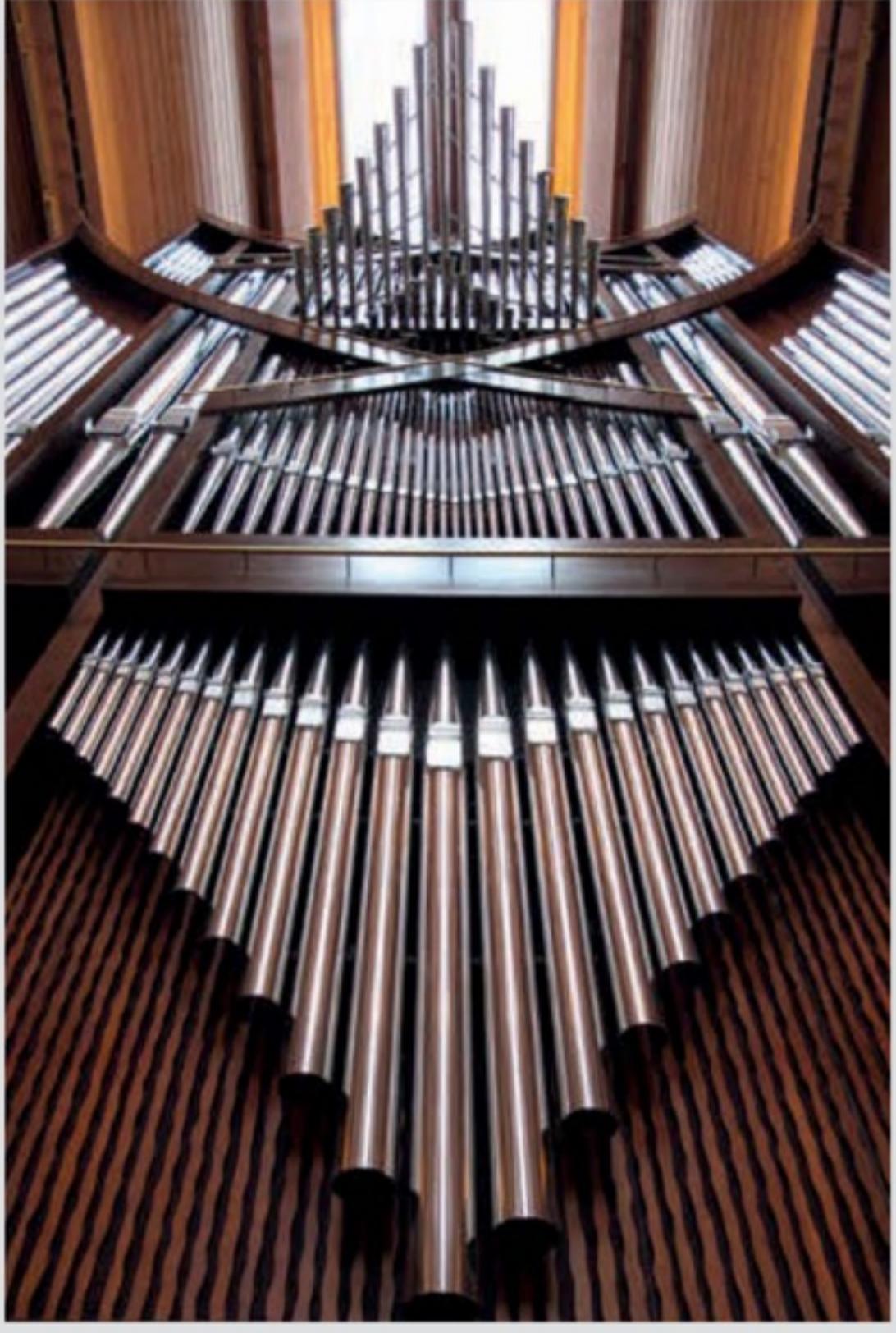
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Intensity and vision

Given John McCabe's vast output of orchestral and chamber music, it would be easy to overlook his choral canon. But there is plenty in the composer's 'constant pleasure' to stimulate choirs and their directors, as **David Wordsworth** demonstrates

GARETH ARNOLD

When John McCabe died in February 2015, after a long and distressing illness, the tributes one might expect in such circumstances proved to be more than especially warm and generous. Perfectly fitting for such a modest man who spent a good deal of his time promoting the work of other composers, be it as a virtuoso pianist, teacher, administrator, or just delving into his seemingly endless knowledge of music from all periods and making an enthusiastic recommendation of a piece to listen to or perform. McCabe would be the last to push his own work and so, in what would have been his 80th birthday year, it seems right to remind oneself of his contribution to choral music, a genre that perhaps neither the composer, nor those that already admire his music, would regard as a primary 'calling-card'.

Born in Huyton, Liverpool in 1939, McCabe was badly burned in an accident as a child and home-schooled for several years, astonishingly writing 13

symphonies by the time he was 11. He later recalled being subjected to a vast range of music, either on mountains of records that were all over the house or listening to his mother, a good amateur violinist. He studied at the Royal Manchester College of Music (now the Royal Northern College of Music) and in Munich, before embarking on a busy dual career as a pianist and composer, having particular success with works for piano, orchestra and, later in life, ballet music, all of it exhibiting a vivid ear for colour and, even in moments of repose, irrepressible energy.

For such a prolific composer, choral music forms a relatively small but nonetheless important part of McCabe's output. Pieces range from relatively straightforward carols within the grasp of amateur choirs to virtuoso settings of a wide range of texts (McCabe was remarkably well-read) for equally virtuoso choirs. Particular associations with a number of choirs brought McCabe great pleasure – the now sadly defunct BBC Northern Singers, the William

▲ John McCabe: he saw composing choral works as 'a relaxation from sterner stuff ... and a way of participating in the great tradition of music for the community'

↳ Ferris Chorale in Chicago, the Choir of St John's College, Cambridge and the King's Singers, who championed McCabe's two thrilling mini choral tone-poems, *Cartography* (2006) and *Scenes in America Deserta* (1986), giving countless performances of the latter, a vivid choral evocation of the heat, desolation and silence of the American desert.

- *Songs of the Garden*: the fifth movement accompaniment suggests a buzzing fly
- ▼ *Scenes in America Deserta* is 'a vivid choral evocation of the heat, desolation and silence of the American desert'

The relationship man has or had with aspects of nature was a constant source of inspiration to McCabe

Nature – or rather, the relationship man has or had with aspects of nature – was a constant source of inspiration to McCabe. *Songs of the Garden*, commissioned by the John Armitage Memorial Trust (JAM) and available in both its original organ and brass quintet accompaniment or with orchestra, follows a path from spring to autumn, setting colourful texts by several English poets, among them Clare, Blake and Hardy and one American, Whitman – all connected in some way with what the composer

calls 'gardeny' topics. Although often at pains to underline that he didn't often try to write music that describes anything as such, one can't help but be taken by the buzzing of the fly in the fifth movement (setting Blake), the slyness of a cat (setting Skelton's 'A Curse on the Cat') and the ecstatic vision of languid relaxation in a summer garden (Whitman's 'Halcyon

Days'). The beautiful fourth movement of this work, 'A Lily-white Rose', also exists in versions for vocal ensemble (a present for the King's Singers) and for unaccompanied choir – a wonderfully evocative and witty piece, worthy of any choir's attention. A feeling of summer also inhabits an earlier work, *Reflections of a Summer Night* (1977), in which another insect dominates a typically light-footed McCabean scherzo – 'The Moth' (Walter de la Mare) – while homage is paid to a nightingale in a setting of part of Keats's famous poem. The instrumentation of flute, oboe, horn, bassoon, percussion, harpsichord and strings (muted throughout) give an added piquancy. Although *Aspects of Whiteness* (1967), one of McCabe's earliest choral works, is more concerned with the sound and resulting textures of the words taken from a chapter of Melville's *Moby Dick* rather than any description of 'The Great Whale', the piece still demonstrates the composer's response to the natural world. It is in effect a dramatic cantata, with a florid, glittering piano accompaniment (written for himself to play) adding another layer of colour rather than giving assistance (in terms of finding pitches) to what needs to be a confident choir.

The metaphysical poet Henry Vaughan (1621-95) was a writer that McCabe returned to several times, although his two settings of some of the poet's best-known texts are separated by some 35 years. Both *The Morning Watch* (1968) and *The Evening Watch* (2003) show the imaginative range of the composer's choral writing: use of solo lines, unaccompanied passages contrasted with never overwhelming organ accompaniment, simple chordal passages contrasted with imitation and counterpoint.

Two McCabe works that are more than worthy of attention by those choirs looking for more of a challenge are *Mangan Triptych* (1979-84) and *Woefully Arrayed* (2009). The Triptych, written over six years for different choirs, set texts by the 19th-century Irish poet James Clarence Mangan, who was beset with all kinds of misfortune through his short life yet still managed to produce work that the composer described as having

'vivid imagery ... a powerfully visionary quality that is superbly controlled yet forcefully spontaneous.' The three movements – 'Visions', 'Siberia' and 'Motet' – can be performed separately or as a set. *Woefully Arrayed*, commissioned by the Three Choirs Festival for Stile Antico, is a meditation on Christ's suffering on the Cross – an intense text resulting in one of McCabe's most powerful works, not least the dense chords of the opening, made all the more effective by dramatic contrasts in dynamics.

McCabe wrote of choral music being a constant pleasure throughout his career, 'a relaxation from sterner stuff ... and a way of participating in the great tradition of music for the community.' Liberally sprinkled through McCabe's catalogue are short Christmas carols, from some of the earliest – 'Mary Laid her Child' (1964), 'To Us Bethlehem City' (1969), and 'A Lute-Book Lullaby' (1977) – to the latest 'I Sing of a Maiden' (2008) and 'Peace Carol' (2014), described by Jeremy Summerly in these pages as 'a lovely and simple creation, naively touching and uncomfortably relevant.' They show a composer keen to make his music useful to all kinds of performers, while being true to himself and finding new ways to respond to well-known texts.

Another early work, worthy of re-evaluation, is a relatively rare setting of an overtly religious text, the *Stabat Mater* (1976), for soprano, chorus and chamber orchestra, a truly anguished setting, but undeniably direct and succinct (at around 15 minutes) in its impact, the final 'Paradisi Gloria' set at a distinctly unsettling *fff* level before drifting into an unexpectedly quiet conclusion. McCabe in more celebratory mood can be found in *Music's Empire* (1981), written for the 100th anniversary of the Incorporated Society of Musicians: originally conceived as a work, like Vaughan Williams's *Serenade to Music*, for 16 solo singers and orchestra, there is no reason why the piece cannot be performed by four solo voices and chorus. The brilliantly resourceful orchestration and dancing rhythms are a wonderful celebration of the art of music.

Finally, two works from the end of McCabe's career – *Psalm-Cantata* (2012), written for the English Baroque Choir, and *Christ's Nativity* (2014), written for the Hallé Choir. *Psalm-Cantata* fulfilled a long-standing wish to write a work based around texts from the Psalms, resulting in a sort of latter-day equivalent to the Bach cantatas; it is scored for two soloists, choir and chamber orchestra, complete with solo arias, chorales and a jubilant finale that brings all the forces together. It seems fitting that the text for what turned out to be McCabe's last choral work, *Christ's Nativity* for double choir and organ, should be by his beloved Henry Vaughan. In his programme note, the

composer describes how he had spent many years listening to a lot of early English church music and that might have had some influence on this particular piece – what is all the more remarkable is the energy, intensity, vision and optimism of the music, coming from a composer at the height of his powers, but tragically in the final stages of the cruellest of illnesses.

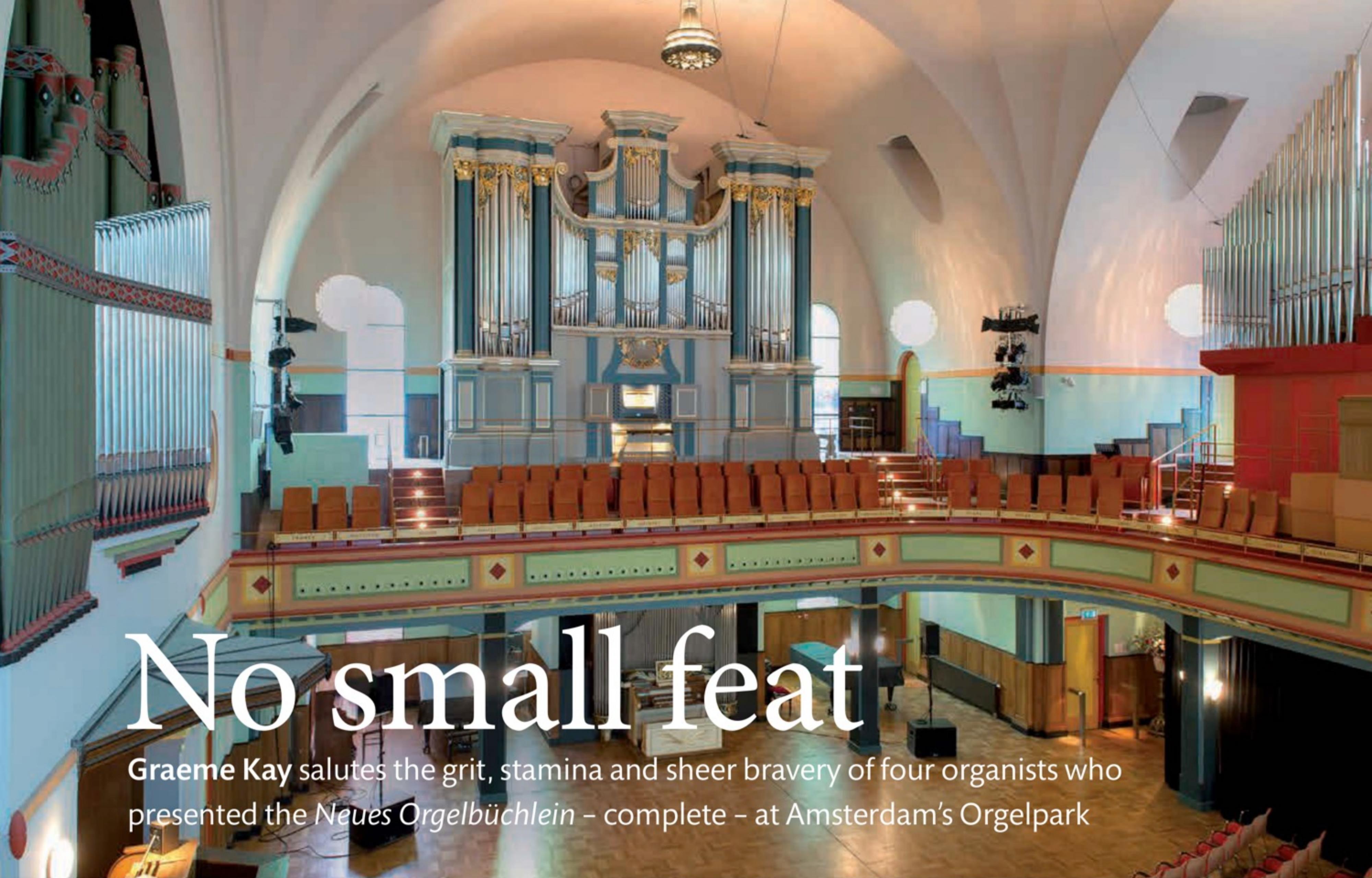
Inevitably, surveys of this kind can only scratch the surface of any composer: what of McCabe's large-scale Three Choirs commission, *Voyage* (1972), for instance? No doubt the forces involved – five soloists, chorus, boys' choir, organ and large orchestra – have worked against further exposure, but it would be quite something to be given the chance to hear this piece properly and not just with piano. Perhaps someone out there is up for the challenge ...? ■

John McCabe's music is published by Novello.

David Wordsworth's recent concerts include performances at the Concertgebouw and Musikverein. He has directed the Addison Singers for over 20 years and toured with them to Budapest in May 2019.

McCabe: Visions

(*Three Marian Carols, Mangan Triptych, Amen/Alleluia, Proud Songsters, The Lily-White Rose, The Morning Watch, The Evening Watch, Great Lord of Lords, A Hymne to God the Father, The Last and Greatest Herald*)
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No small feat

Graeme Kay salutes the grit, stamina and sheer bravery of four organists who presented the *Neues Orgelbüchlein* – complete – at Amsterdam's Orgelpark

▲ (from left) The Orgelpark's Sauer, Baroque, Molzer (beneath), and Verschueren organs

Talk about risking sensory overload ... When William Whitehead announced his plan for the *Neues Orgelbüchlein* – his decade-long project to commission the 118 'missing' projected chorale preludes from J.S. Bach's 48-piece collection 'in which a beginning organist receives given instruction as to performing a chorale in a multitude of ways while achieving mastery in the study of the pedal' – to be performed complete, the scale of the undertaking called to mind other great musical epics: Wagner's *Ring*, Stockhausen's 'Licht' operas, Sorabji's organ symphonies. But how, where, and by whom, could this dream be realised?

Whitehead calculated that the complete cycle of compositions – every one of which (save Bach's, of course) he has personally supervised from initial brief to premiere and eventual publication – would amount to about seven hours of music (this proved to be an underestimate); this could be achieved in three recitals of 50-60 items each.

Given the wide range of styles of music, and the desirability of having an 'authentic'

sound for the Bach originals, the crucial choice of performance venue suggested one offering either a monster, multi-divisional organ, or one with a multiplicity of organs under one roof. Into the latter category fell Amsterdam's Orgelpark – with its history of research and experimental programming, and loyal, open-minded audience, it proved to be the obvious choice.

Adjacent to the city's popular Vondelpark, the beautifully restored and modernised former Parkkerk complements its original 1922 Sauer organ with a salon organ by Molzer (1925), a Cavaillé-Coll-style Verschueren organ (2009), a reconstruction by Orgelmakerij Reil of a medieval organ (2012), and the Orgelpark's *pièce de résistance* – the Utopia Baroque organ (2018). Inspired by the visual aspect and soundworld of the 18th-century German builder Zacharias Hildebrandt's organs, the instrument was also designed to be digitally interactive and of service to contemporary composers. It was therefore built – by a consortium – to offer performers both mechanical and digital control. Elbertse

Orgelmakers (NL) built the case, wind supply, the mechanical action, the wooden pipework, and the digital console; Hermann Eule GmbH of Bautzen (DE) manufactured the metal pipe work; tonal finishing was by Munetaka Yokota of Tokyo (JP); and Sinua GmbH of Düsseldorf (DE) developed the digital software. The sound it makes across all departments is of power and sheer, focused brilliance.

The digital console is itself a thing of fiendish complexity, able to offer any stop on the Baroque or Sauer organs, separately or together, on any of three manuals and pedal, in any pitch or transposition. Placed on the Orgelpark's flat floor, right in front of the audience, it was likely to be of use to the *Gesamtorgelbüchlein*'s pioneers, and so it proved. That the performers only had about three hours' familiarisation and registration time each, suggested minor miracles of preparation.

Joining William Whitehead in criss-crossing between the digital console and the separate organs in a seamless parade, as they essayed their allocation of 40-odd

chorales each, were the Orgelbüchlein Project's academic adviser John Scott Whiteley (JSW), Tom Bell, and the award-winning young Dutch organist Laurens de Man – 'I didn't know these guys,' declared De Man, disarmingly; 'the Orgelpark recruited me to take part.' Not a decision he regretted, judging by his response to his new professional colleagues, and his intense and committed playing. All of the performers paused from time to time to offer relaxed and friendly insights into the music, direct to the audience. For example, we learned that one of Whitehead's allotted composers required a pedal canon in the right foot while the left foot simultaneously played a reverse canon at half the speed. Another well-known composer – Paul

affekt, the new pieces were tasked to reflect Bach's originals, mostly presenting a 'once-through' of the melody rather than fantasia-like repetitions, investigations and elaborations. Whitehead's expectations, and choice of commissioned composers, ensured that many of the schools of contemporary composition were represented: minimalism, 'spirituality', new complexity, modernism, serialism, jazz, and well-made pieces of no particular stylistic allegiance. One or two composers, it must be said, ignored the rules and did their own thing.

How to encapsulate the experience of listening to 118 new and diverse compositions end-to-end? The majority came from the UK and continental Europe;

'Nun ruhe alle Wälder' from the late Jacques van Oortmerssen, who taught both Bell and De Man; an intriguing and powerfully felt 'Ein feste Burg' from Cheryl Frances-Hoad; a teasingly avant-garde 'Der du bist drei in Einigkeit' from Joanna Ward. And it was as well that JSW warned us about 'O heiliger Geist, O heiliger Gott' – Franz Josef Stieber rendered the gentle Christmas melody known to Anglophones as 'O Little One Sweet' as an ear-splitting toccata.

What next for the *Gesamt*? Clearly it is something which can only be undertaken under festival or academic conditions. But I would urge Whitehead and his collaborators to consider developing a tourable programme of highlights from the *Gesamt*: there are more than enough of those, and it would be fun to build them into a variable two-hour programme.

'Thank you for being such a fantastically attentive and welcoming audience,' Whitehead summed up at the end. But greeting the products of such painstaking preparation and execution with close attention was the least we could offer. In all those hours there was only one, literal, wobble: 'The digital console unfortunately retained control of the Baroque organ's tremulants' was the slightly baffling explanation. No matter. William, John, Tom and Laurens may be assured that it was all worth it – in spades. The final line of introduction to the *Orgelbüchlein* does, after all, remind those who essay it that Bach composed it 'In honour of our Lord alone, that my fellow man his skill may hone.' ■

The playing throughout was of virtuoso standard, fuelled backstage by high-energy chocolate bars

Rouders – reckoned his piece amounted to 'musical cubism', for reasons not entirely clear to anyone. JSW theorised, based on good evidence, that the origin of the *Orgelbüchlein* was an extension of Bach's engagement with all the young children in his Weimar home at the time. Bell explained that, just like Bach, one of his composers had deliberately left no instructions on tempo, articulation or dynamics, which meant he found extra reward in being in effect a co-creator of the piece.

All the while, a digital readout high on a wall of the Orgelpark registered the tally of pieces – 165 in total, not 164, as, appropriately, the cycle of three concerts began, and finished with a repeat of, Bach's own 'Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland'.

The playing throughout was of virtuoso standard, fuelled backstage by high-energy chocolate bars and other sustaining snacks ('My wife has loaded me up with flapjacks,' Bell confided) designed to ensure that the organists were not dead on their feet, having been playing from noon until 11pm with a total of only about two-and-a-half hours' break.

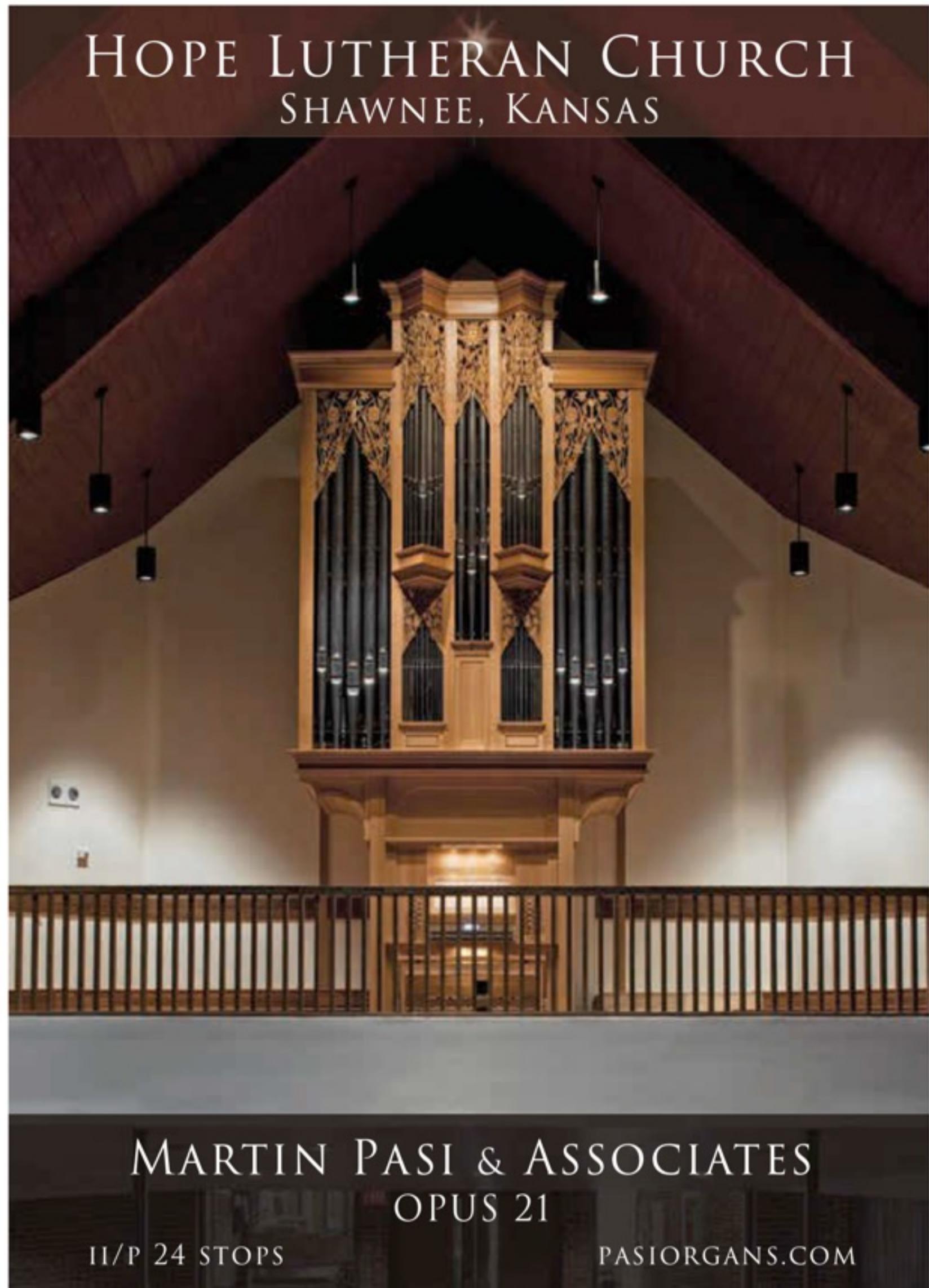
The OB Project encouraged stylistic eclecticism in its chosen composers, subject to some ground rules: in their technical density and concentration of Bachian

many pieces made an immediate impact, only a few prompting the reaction, 'Next!' Some were arrestingly good, such as Thea Musgrave's 'Lobet den Herrn, denn er ist sehr freundlich'; Andrew Keeling's 'reggae' 'Hast du denn, Jesu, dein Angesicht'; Giles Swayne's witty 'Auf meinen lieben Gott'; Edward Higginbottom's similarly wide-ranging and witty 'Gen Himmel aufgefahren ist'; a stylistically pitch-perfect 'Nun freut euch' (Francis Jackson) and 'Das walt mein Gott' (Matthew Martin); Simon Johnson's toccatina-style 'Wohl dem, der in Gottes Furcht steht'; a delightful bubbling-brook

▼ Heroes of the hours: (l to r) Laurens de Man, William Whitehead, Tom Bell, John Scott Whiteley



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 **Music**



Music that heals

Clare Stevens explores the power of music to bring together and inspire young singers in Northern Ireland

UYC

In August 1999 a group of young singers gathered at the University of Ulster's Jordanstown campus, on the northern shore of Belfast Lough, for the first ever residential course of the Ulster Youth Choir (UYC). It was directed by Christopher Bell, who three years earlier had established the National Youth Choir of Scotland (NYCoS). An Ulsterman by birth and upbringing himself, he was (and still is) passionate about the value of bringing young people from a wide area together to give them a musical and social experience that enriches and extends the opportunities available to them locally.

In the case of UYC, that means not just giving teenagers who may be attending single-sex schools their first taste of singing SATB repertoire, but enabling them to make friendships that cross sectarian boundaries: since its inception, the choir's membership has been drawn from Roman Catholic, Protestant and the increasing number of integrated schools and colleges. Their debut concert in the Guildhall, Londonderry on 27 August 1999 was attended by the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, who had been closely involved in negotiating the Good Friday Agreement that had brought a fragile peace to the province just over a year before.

Twenty years ago, Bell recalls, the standard of singing among young people in Ulster was already high, nurtured by some fine heads of music in individual institutions and by Ulster Television's popular School Choir of the Year competition. But UYC brought something new – principally the additional expertise of Bell himself, and a team of singing teachers and accompanists from Scotland and England.

A 60-strong group was divided into the main UYC, for singers aged 16-24, and Ulster Youth Training Choir, for those aged 15 or over who had a little less experience. For their first two concerts the new choir tackled partsongs by Rutter and Brahms, more complex works by Praetorius and Durante, and Faure's *Cantique de Jean Racine*, plus an arrangement of 'All through the Night' performed by the small cohort of young tenors and basses.

The *Belfast Telegraph*'s music critic wrote that it was clear that 'these dedicated choristers share Christopher Bell's enthusiasm for pitching one's standards as high as possible.' The critic of the *Irish News* was equally complimentary: 'I was impressed by the basic sound of the group and by the obvious attention it pays to core aspects of choral discipline. Artistic director Christopher Bell and his ▶

▲ Bridge over troubled waters: since its inception 20 years ago, the Ulster Youth Choir has brought together singers from across the province's sectarian divide



▲ **Passing the baton:**
UYC conductors
(top row, l to r) founder
Christopher Bell,
David Lawrence,
Greg Beardsell;
(second row, l to r)
Dominic Peckham,
Andrew Nunn

◀ vocal coaches had done an excellent job to create something from nothing, and to draw a quality of sound which one might have expected from a choir that had been singing together for years.'

From this promising start grew a more balanced choir that was soon able to take on more substantial repertoire such as Poulenc's *Gloria*, Haydn's *Te Deum*, contemporary pieces by composers born or living in Ireland such as Gerald Barry and Colin Mawby, recordings with the Ulster Orchestra, tours to Dublin, Edinburgh and Paris, and prestigious engagements such as the BBC's Proms in the Park.

In 2005 Bell stepped down from directing UYC, due to the difficulty of reconciling clashing diary dates with his NYCoS commitments. He was succeeded in turn by David Lawrence, Greg Beardsell and Dominic Peckham, each of whom had great skill in motivating youth choirs and did much to enrich the experience of UYC members, founding a chamber choir for 25 of the best singers in 2008 and introducing a wide range of new repertoire in different genres, from sections of the medieval *Messe de Nostre Dame* by Guillaume de Machaut and motets by Bach and Mendelssohn to works by Gabriel Jackson, György Orbán, Paweł Łukaszewski

and Eric Whitacre, pop songs and Irish folksong arrangements.

In December 2012 UYC members travelled to London to join the Gabrieli Young Singers Scheme for a recording of Britten's *War Requiem* alongside the Gabrieli Consort and Players, conducted by Paul McCreesh. In 2013 UYC joined the Irish Youth Choir for a combined concert in Christ Church Cathedral Dublin; and in 2014 and 2015 UYC members formed part of the BBC Proms Youth Choir, performing the *War Requiem* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall, conducted by Andris Nelsons, and Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* with the Vienna Philharmonic in London, Birmingham and Lucerne, under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle.

The choir has run conducting apprenticeships and residencies for both emerging and established composers, and its most recent major initiative was the setting up in 2017 of a junior choir for singers aged 11-14, which this year will be conducted by Alison McNeill, an assistant director of the RSNO Junior Chorus in Glasgow.

Donal Kearney, who now runs a music school in a seaside suburb of Dublin, produces music videos,

and sings and plays in a folk-soul band, has vivid memories of doing two UYC courses as a teenager. 'I loved it and I took away so much,' he recalls. 'For the first time in my life my eyes were opened to the effect that collective singing can have on a group of people. One of the main things I remember is the confidence it gave me. As a young man, I was working out my own strengths and weaknesses. As young singers, we engaged collectively in a way that we will never forget. Even if we don't remember people's names (or their faces!), we still remember the emotion of creating that music together.' As an adult, Kearney has been a pastoral mentor on UYC courses, helping to give the next generation similar experiences. He adds that one of his contemporaries in the tenor section of UYC was Fra Fee, who is now a household name in musical theatre circles.

Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at the Proms is one of the memorable performances that lingers in the mind of baritone Brian McAlea from several years as a member of UYC, which he says 'gave me the opportunity to perform many different types of

choral music with some of Northern Ireland's best young singers, many of whom are still some of my closest friends. I fell in love with singing through Ulster Youth Choir and many of my favourite memories of singing are from those courses.'

McAlea is now working as a professional soloist and consort singer, with companies such as Nevill Holt, Longborough and Grange Festival operas, the Dunedin Consort, and Northern Ireland's professional early music ensemble Sestina.

Sestina's director, counter-tenor Mark Chambers, directed the 2018 UYC course, bringing an interesting new perspective as he is primarily a singer and singing teacher rather than a conductor. 'That was really good for the choir,' says UYC's new permanent artistic director, Andrew Nunn, who had already been appointed and was able to attend the main summer course. 'Mark has an international outlook and is a really good technician. He brought lots of new ideas and new repertoire, with lots of early music including some Heinrich Schütz, but also Arvo Pärt's *The Deer's Cry*, which sets an Irish text, and Philip Moore's

▼ The UYC encourages young voices in (clockwise, from top l) the Training Choir, the Junior Choir, and the Chamber Choir



ULSTER YOUTH CHOIR

↳ *Three Prayers of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.* They found it challenging, but they rose to it.'

Nunn is director of choirs at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland; while still a postgraduate student of conducting he won the BBC Choir of the Year Competition with his female voice choir Les Sirènes. His first engagement with UYC was conducting the chamber choir's televised performance at the 2018 BBC Proms in the Park, which gave him an opportunity to build a relationship with some of the older UYC members. He spent much of last winter and spring running the workshops in

▼ Performing opportunities have included (from top) the 2018 BBC Proms in the Park, and a tour to Paris

schools and colleges around Northern Ireland that form part of the audition process for UYC, and was also on the jury for this year's BBC Northern Ireland School Choir of the Year competition. This gave him a good sense of the current standard of young people's singing in the province: 'There are some amazing schools and teachers,' he says, 'and we had a great response to our workshops, with lots of kids staying on for auditions.'

This summer Nunn directs his first UYC course, culminating in a 20th anniversary concert that will include a performance by a choir of UYC alumni. 'I've chosen a very broad spectrum of music for both the main and the training choirs this year – music that I know very well myself, so I know I can teach it well and get the very best out of the singers,' says Nunn. But standards need to be high: young people want to work hard – that's why they come on a choral course. I'm really looking forward to getting to know UYC, building on its first 20 years and taking the organisation into the future.' ■

www.uyc.org.uk

The Ulster Youth Choir 20th Anniversary Concert takes place in the Ulster Hall, Belfast on 27 July at 7.30 pm. Tickets from www.ulsterhall.co.uk

Clare Stevens works as a writer, editor and publicist in the Welsh Marches, where she sings with Hereford Choral Society.

COURTESY BBC NI



In May 2019, the ISM – which leads the Save Music campaign (savemusic.org.uk) – released a fourth report into the effects of Brexit on the music profession. Francesca Treadaway, Senior Communications Manager at the ISM, gives a summary of the results and its recommendations.

At the ISM, it is our duty to ensure musicians are protected in their work. This support ranges from a quick piece of advice over the phone, to fees recovery or in this case, a fully-fledged campaign and original research to find out exactly what is going on within the profession.

We have been seeing the effects of Brexit on the music profession since the results of the referendum way back in 2016. And although we haven't left (still) we have been seeing the impact grow steadily.

We released our fourth report into the effects of Brexit on the music profession in May 2019. This is unique research, conducted in February 2019, which builds on previous surveys of musicians and reveals the concerns of more than 2,000 musicians in areas such as future work, mobility and visas, transportation of instruments and equipment, and health and social security.

The headlines from the report include:

- Almost **50%** of respondents identified an impact on their professional work since the EU referendum result in 2016 – **95%** of whom said it was negative (from 19% in 2016, to 26% in 2017, to 40% in 2018, and to 50% in 2019).
- **63%** of respondents cited difficulty in securing future work in EU27/EEA countries as the biggest issue they face due to Brexit – and **more than 1 in 10 respondents** reported that offers of work have been withdrawn or cancelled with Brexit given as a reason.
- **85%** of survey respondents visit the EU27/EEA for work at least once a year, **22%** visit the EU27/EEA more than 11 times per year and more than a third (**35%**) spend at least a month per year working in EU27/EEA countries.
- One in seven musicians have less than a week's notice between being offered work and having to take it.
- **64%** of survey respondents said a two-year, multi-entry visa would allay their concerns about their future ability to work in the EU27/EEA if freedom of movement rights were lost.
- **95%** of respondents preferred the two-year, multi-entry visa over an 'extension of the Permitted Paid Engagement (PPE) visa.
- **83%** of respondents said it would be beneficial for a government department (e.g. BEIS) to provide a dedicated hotline for musicians to offer guidance on mobility issues.
- More than half of respondents (**58%**) reported that they were concerned about the transportation of instruments and/or equipment in the EU27 & EEA in the future.

The recommendations in the report include:

- The Government must maintain freedom of movement under existing rules for the music profession.
- If freedom of movement rights cease, the Government must introduce a two-year, cheap and admin-light, multi-entry touring visa.

- A Government Department (e.g. BEIS) must set up a dedicated hotline to offer guidance on mobility issues.
- The Government (DEFRA) must expand the list of approved CITES-designated ports for entry and exit, to include Dover-Calais and the Eurotunnel at the very least, so that musicians can travel more easily with their instruments.
- DEFRA must clarify post-Brexit CITES regulations, providing clear guidance that covers all the possible Brexit outcomes (e.g. after the transition period).
- The Government must maintain European Health Insurance as provided by the EHIC system, or provide an equivalent scheme.
- HMRC must maintain the A1 certificate system or provide a suitable equivalent.
- The Government must engage with the music sector to provide a roadmap on all issues relating to mobility rights, customs regulations, health insurance provision and social security.

This report demonstrates how much the music workforce depends on EU27/EEA countries for professional work, and reveals a profession which is deeply concerned about the future as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

It also reveals how musicians' livelihoods depend on the ability to travel easily and cheaply around multiple countries for work in a short period of time. If freedom of movement is to end, the Government must ensure that free movement rights are maintained for musicians, or introduce a two-year multi-entry visa for British musicians working in the EU27 – which 95% of respondents preferred over the Permitted Paid Engagement (PPE). This report also demonstrates how much the music workforce relies on UK-EU mechanisms - for example, the EHIC scheme and A1 certificate - to support and enable them to work in the EU27/EEA.

At a time of great uncertainty, musicians need to know their jobs in EU27/EEA will be secure once the UK leaves the EU. Therefore the ISM is calling for the Government to take action, using the recommendations outlined in this report, to protect musicians' livelihoods and the all-important music and wider creative industries.

Read the full report at www.ism.org/reports.

Find out more about joining the ISM at www.ism.org



Étampes stamp

In a town south of Paris, Bertrand Cattiaux has restored a rare renaissance organ and also built a new instrument in French baroque style. **Pierre Dubois** reports.

PHOTOS BY PIERRE DUBOIS

Some places seem to have been graced by the gods with the privilege of being the abode of not merely one, but several organs of outstanding historical and musical interest. Étampes, an elegant town of some 25,000 inhabitants south of Paris and not far from Fontainebleau, is a case in point. It counts no fewer than three organs of particular significance. Besides a fine mid-19th-century organ by Louis Suret in the Church of St-Basile, the collegiate church of Notre-Dame-du-Fort boasts the presence of a rare renaissance organ restored by Bertrand Cattiaux about 20 years ago, while the church of St-Gilles hosts a brand new organ in the French baroque style, also built by Cattiaux and inaugurated in 2018.

Born in Étampes, Cattiaux discovered the instrument of Notre-Dame-du-Fort when he was a young man, and it was the beauty of that very

organ that triggered his decision to become an organ builder. The recent completion of his organ at St-Gilles, which can be seen both as a complement to the historic instrument of Notre-Dame-du-Fort and as the crowning achievement of a long career dedicated to the art of French classical organ building, is a tribute to his home town and, symbolically, a form of acknowledgment of, and credit to the strong impression left on him by the precious Notre-Dame-du-Fort masterpiece. In his turn, Bertrand Cattiaux has left his own stamp on the instrumental patrimony of his birthplace.

Erected in 1597, the organ of Notre-Dame-du-Fort is one of the oldest and rarest instruments in France, with 45 per cent of its pipework dating back to the 16th century; the name of its original builder is unknown. Amazingly, it traversed the centuries without undergoing too much destructive alteration. In 1708 it was restored and slightly enlarged by the famous organ builder François Thierry (who built the organ at Notre-Dame, Paris, in 1730-33), but five stops dating back to the late 16th century are still extant: the treble of the Montre, Prestant, Doublette, Cymbale and Nazard are all very ancient stops that present similar characteristics. Later, both Louis-Paul Dallery (in 1826) and Louis Suret (in 1844) worked on the instrument, but in rather a conservative way, so that it was eventually possible to reconstruct the tonal character of the original organ, while retaining the second manual (Echo) and the pedals added by Thierry. A new façade was stuck to the front of the tribune in the 19th century. It took some 18 years of discussion and argument to reach the decision to restore this unique instrument in 1997, but it was well worth the wait, for the organ now provides both players and listeners with a rare musical experience.

One is immediately struck by the organ's forthrightness and presence. Although not a large instrument, it speaks boldly into the vast building, the fine acoustics of which magnify the sound. The voicing brings out polyphonic writing particularly



► The renaissance organ of Notre-Dame-du-Fort in Étampes; the grand tribune and its large sculptures were added in the 19th century

► The console, with its small French pedalboard. The bench had to be raised, for in the 16th century the organist would have been standing



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Notre-Dame-du-Fort, Étampes

ANON. (1597)/
FRANÇOIS THIERRY (1708)/
BERTRAND CATTIAUX (1997)

GRAND-ORGUE

(48 notes)

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Montre | 8 |
| Bourdon | 8 |
| Prestant | 4 |
| Flûte d'allemands | 4 |
| Doublette | 2 |
| Nazard | 2 ^{2/3} |
| Tierce | 1 ^{3/5} |
| Fourniture | II |
| Cymbale | III |
| Cornet | V |
| Trompette | 8 |
| Cromorne | 8 |
| Voix Humaine | 8 |

ECHO

(32 notes)

| | |
|--------------|-----|
| Bourdon | 8 |
| Prestant | 4 |
| Cornet | III |
| Voix Humaine | 8 |

*Permanent Great to Pedal tirasse
Meantone temperament (8 pure thirds)
Soft tremulant*

Well. In this respect, the impressive 16th-century Montre is quite different from the kind of Montres found, for example, on the organs of Clicquot built in the late 18th century, which are mellower, rounder and less polyphonic. While a few years ago one tended to have a global approach to the broad category of 'the French classical organ' and one would not balk at the idea of recording, say, the music of Grigny (published in 1699) on the Clicquot organ of Poitiers (completed in 1791), subtle differences in voicing styles are now better perceived, understood and taken into account. The renaissance organ of Notre-Dame, Étampes, is a good illustration of what an early polyphonic organ sounds like. Characteristically, the Tierce can blend in the *plein jeu* registration because it is narrower and less 'flutey' than later Tierce stops. You can even add the Cornet to the plenum without any problem and to great effect, and the colour of the *plein jeu* changes dramatically when you add the



Cymbale to the Fourniture, thus offering a variety of tonal colours to plenum registrations. Consequently – as Xavier Eustache, the incumbent organist of the organs in Étampes, points out – this instrument, with its meantone temperament and particular voicing, is ideally suited to the performance of the music of Titelouze or Louis Couperin, which can so often be marred by inappropriate organs.

The history of the organ of St-Gilles is quite different. The former instrument was destroyed during a bomb attack on 10 June 1944, which damaged some of the railway tracks, the nearby houses and parts of the church. A generous benefactress made a large donation for a new organ to be built. Other contributions were made by some 15 other citizens, and the town paid for the elegant, brand new wooden tribune on which the organ stands. In all, it took about eight years for the project to come to fruition.

▲ The Echo division with the 18th-century draw-stop action on the left

▲ The Echo pipework





◀ (opposite page)
The elegant case of the St-Gilles organ, built out of beautiful, first-quality oak. The Grand-Orgue is set directly above the Positif at the front edge of the tribune

◀ (this page)
(l) The Positif pipework
(r) The console, shown here with the German pedalboard; a French pedalboard can be substituted. The Grand-Orgue draw-stops are on the left-hand jamb, and the Pedal and Positif draw-stops on the right

◀ Impressed by the extraordinary presence and character of the Notre-Dame-du-Fort organ, Bertrand Cattiau has long been captivated by the Flemish, polyphonic style introduced into France in the renaissance. Notably, he restored the beautiful Lesselier organ now located in the church of Saint-Michel in Bolbec, Normandy. When it was decided to build a new instrument for St-Gilles, Étampes, Cattiau opted for an organ inspired by that of Bolbec. However, due to financial limitations the organ is smaller, with only three manuals (no Echo division) and pedals, and 27 stops in all.

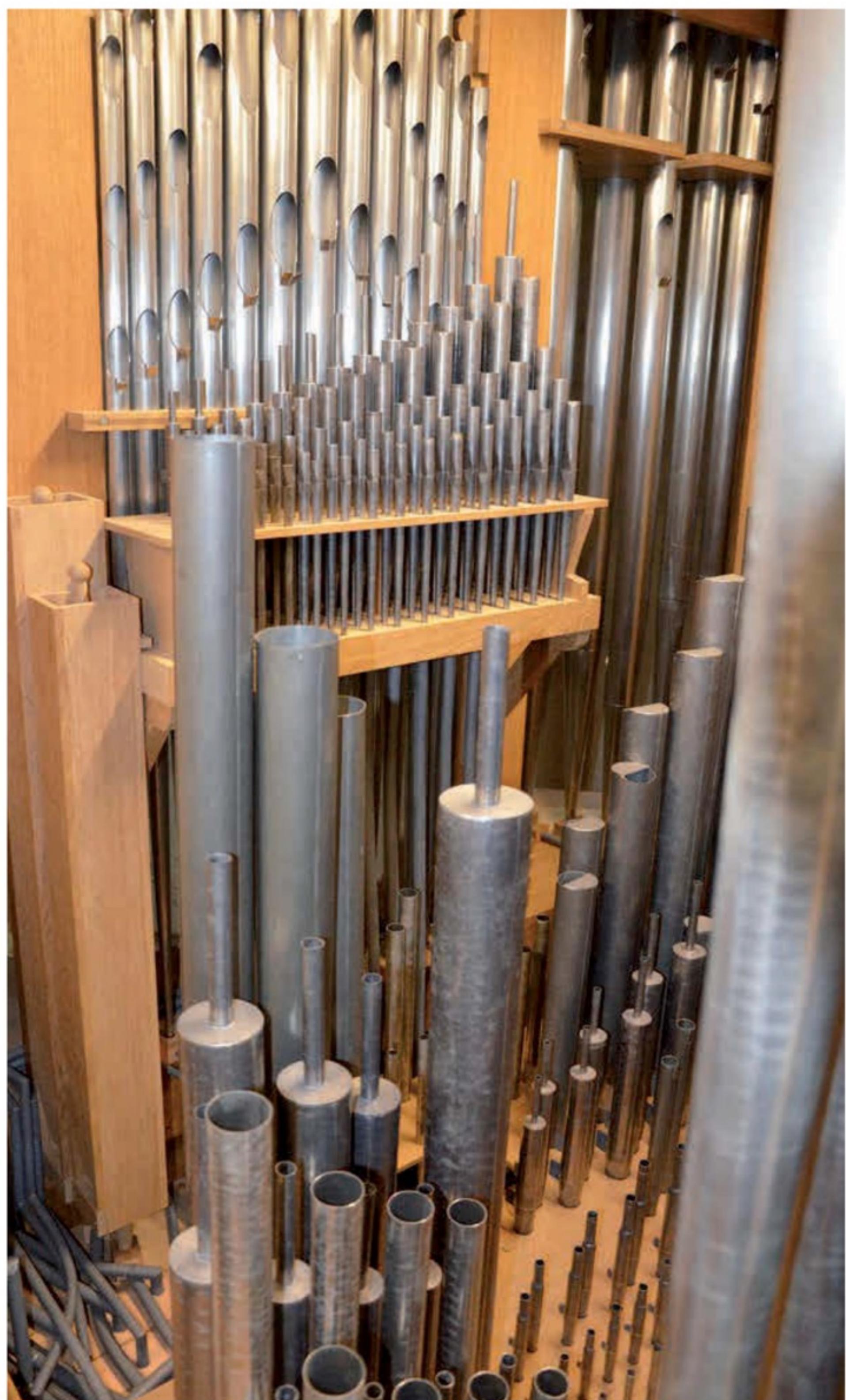
The Grand-Orgue is placed directly above the Positif, right at the edge of the tribune, while the console is at the back of the instrument, which makes it somewhat tricky at first to judge exactly the effect produced by the organ down in the nave. As in Bolbec or, for instance, in the Blumenroeder organ at Charolles [see C&O July/August 2018], some stops are characteristic of early 17th-century style: the 1ft Flageolet and the Tiercelette in the Grand-Orgue department (which can be used in the *plein jeu*), a beautiful Flûte d'Allemand and the Pedal 16ft Sacqueboute, which is a kind of bass Cromorne of great efficacy. The rest of the composition is standard for a French baroque organ, a style with

St-Gilles, Étampes

BERTRAND CATTIAU (2013/2018)

| I. POSITIF | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| (50 notes) | | | |
| Bourdon | 8 | Tiercelette | 1 ³ /5 |
| Montre | 4 | Flageolet | 1 |
| Flûte | 4 | Plein-Jeu | IV |
| Nazard | 2 ² /3 | Trompette | 8 |
| Doublette | 2 | Voix Humaine | 8 |
| Tierce | 1 ³ /5 | Gr. Cornet | V |
| Quinte | 1 ¹ /3 | | |
| Plein-Jeu | III | III. RÉCIT | |
| Cromorne | 8 | Cornet | V |
| | | | |
| II. GRAND-ORGUE | | | |
| (50 notes) | | | |
| Montre | 8 | Flûte | 8 |
| Bourdon | 8 | Flûte | 4 |
| Prestant | 4 | Sacqueboute | 16 |
| Flûte | 4 | Trompette | 8 |
| Quintflûte | 2 ² /3 | Shift coupler: I/II | |
| Doublette | 2 | Great to Pedal tirasse | |
| Flûte | 2 | Tremulant | |

▼ The Grand-Orgue pipework with its mounted Cornet right behind the façade. The big pipes in the front on the right are those of the Pedal 16ft Sacquebouté



which Cattiaux has had a long acquaintance (he famously reconstructed the organ at the Royal Chapel of Versailles, and, either alone or with Jean-Loup Boisseau, has restored numerous historic organs, such as Bolbec, the Moucherel of Cintegabelle, the Lépine of Sarlat and the Clicquot of Poitiers, among many others). His extensive experience really shows in the St-Gilles organ, which is an ideal vehicle for 17th-century repertoire. The polyphonic Plein-Jeu and the two Cornets are bright, direct and powerful, as they should be. The Flutes are mellow and extremely poetic – perhaps the most endearing sounds of the instrument. The *grand jeu* has the

right tone-colour, but to make up for the regrettable absence of a 4ft Clairon, it may make sense to add the Positif's Jeu de Tierce, as recommended in the prefaces of the period. The Cromorne and Voix Humaine are both poetic and singing. The action is light and precise and the build quality cannot be faulted, with first-class materials all round. Cattiaux has manifestly done his best to offer his home town the summation of his skill and art.

Modernity can paradoxically take many different, apparently contradictory ways. In musical matters, the rise of so-called 'authentic', 'early music' performance can be seen less as the product of a conservative or retrograde agenda, than as one of the results of a new, modern, up-to-date approach. Indeed, the quest for an informed understanding of the musical practice of the past is a recent, modern development in the history of music. Traditionally, our forefathers played the music of their own time, not that of the past. And when an interest in ancient music developed in the 18th century and, later, when J.S. Bach's music was rediscovered in the early 19th century, thanks in particular to Mendelssohn, no conscious effort was made to perform the music in the style of the past. On the contrary, it was almost systematically modernised so as to suit contemporary instruments and tastes. Thus, building an organ (or harpsichord) with techniques used by 17th-century builders is not a sign of nostalgia but a marker of a new kind of enlightened modernity, which has turned its back on the already outdated neo-classical style that was in favour only a few decades ago. Cattiaux's brand new baroque organ, designed and built in a 17th-century style, is a beautiful illustration of these dialectics of past and present. It brings the music of the baroque age vividly into our times. After decades of study and numerous restorations, reconstructions and copies of historic instruments, the best French organ builders have fully recovered the style, spirit and ethos of *ancien régime* organ builders and now build utterly convincing instruments that make it possible to bring the music of the past into our own time. ■

Thanks to Xavier Eustache, titulaire of the Étampes organs, for his kind welcome, his patience and his excellent presentation of the two instruments; and to David Ponsford, who kindly read the initial draft of this article.

A retired university professor of English, Pierre Dubois is a specialist in 18th-century English music and literature. A self-taught musician, he is titulaire of the historical F.-H. Clicquot organ (1783) of Souvigny, France.

RECITAL ROUND-UP

SUMMER FRUITS

A bumper crop of recitals this summer – so many that you will need to turn to the *C&O* website for a much fuller listing: bit.ly/2WTIQHV. In addition, turn to *News* (p.13) for a preview of St Albans International Organ Festival (8–20 July).

Elsewhere, Canadian virtuoso Isabelle Demers kicks off Westminster Abbey's annual Summer Organ Festival (pictured, right) with works by Bach, Alkan, Tournemire and Stravinsky; following the success of its first Organ Festival last year, Guildford Cathedral holds another series, beginning with Richard Moore's recital on 25 July; and St Paul's Cathedral continues its 'Fantastic Feats' series with recitals by visiting North American organist Ken Cowan (4 Jul) and Mainz Cathedral incumbent Daniel Beckmann playing Dupré, Schumann and Reubke (1 Aug).

Organ concerts are part of broader-based festivals: the Edinburgh Fringe has recitals around the Scottish capital city; the Southern Cathedrals Festival (this year in Chichester) has a celebrity recital by German organist Franz Hauk; and John Scott Whiteley gives the celebrity recital at the Gloucester Three Choirs Festival (see *News*, p.12).

All these in addition to multiple recitals at lunchtimes, after services, and individually scheduled for mornings, afternoons and evenings. Truly an *embarras de richesses*.



MAGGIE HAMILTON

Arundel Cathedral at 7.30pm

D'Arcy Trinkwon (12, 26 Jul)
01903 882297

Bath Abbey at 1pm

James Lancelot (16 Jul) 01225 422462

Brecon Cathedral at 1.10pm*

Stephen Moore (7pm, 3 Jul), Alex Berry (12 Jul), Stephen Power (7pm, 7 Aug), Carl Grainger (23 Aug) 01874 624837

Cardiff, Y Tabernacle at 12.30pm

Jane Watts (27 Jul) 02920 34491

Cheltenham College at 1.15pm

Alexander Ffinch (2 Jul) 01242 265600

Chester Cathedral at 1.10pm

Thursdays; 01244 500974

Chesterfield, St Mary and All Saints at 12.15pm

David Butterworth (11 Jul)
0115 962 5400

Chichester Cathedral at 7pm

Franz Hauk (18 Jul) 01243 782595

Cromer, St Peter & St Paul at 8pm

Martin Ellis (9 Jul) 01263 512000

Croydon Minster at 4.30pm

Jonathan Vaughn (14 Jul) 020 8688 8104

Edinburgh, St Andrew's and St George's West at 12.30pm

Chris Nickol (7 Aug), John Kitchen (14 Aug), Philip Coad (21 Aug)
0131 225 3847

Edinburgh, St Cuthbert's at 12.30pm

Samuel Prouse (5 Aug), Hans Uwe Hielscher (6 Aug), Anthony Hammond (7 Aug), Wayne Weaver (8 Aug), John Kitchen (9 Aug) 0131 229 1142

Edinburgh, St Giles' Cathedral at 8pm*

Craig Cramer (5.30pm, 20 Jul), Franz Hauk (24 Jul), Christophe Mantoux (31 Jul), Simon Leach (6pm, 4 Aug), Gábor Szotyori Nagy (7 Aug), Jordan English (14 Aug), Michael Harris (21 Aug) 0131 226 0674

Edinburgh, St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral at 4.45pm*

Duncan Ferguson (4 Aug), Will Briant (1.10pm, 7 Aug), Joseph Beech (11 Aug), John Kitchen (18 Aug), Lars

Schwarze (1.10pm, 23 Aug)
0131 225 6293

Gloucester Cathedral at 2pm

John Scott Whiteley (29 Jul)
01452 768928

Grasmere, St Oswald's at 4pm

Ian Hare (28 Jul) 017684 83886

Guildford Cathedral at 7.30pm

Richard Moore (25 Jul), Colin Andrews (1 Aug), Anne Page (8 Aug), Arnau Reynés (15 Aug), Katherine Dienes-Williams (22 Aug) 01483 547868

Hereford Cathedral at 3.05pm*

Henry Metcalfe (13 Jul), Peter Dyke (10 Aug); Tuesdays at 1.15pm.
01432 374208

Leicester Cathedral at 1pm*

David Price (9 Jul), Paul Provost (16 Jul), D'Arcy Trinkwon (7.30pm, 23 Jul) 0116 261 5200

Linlithgow, St Michael's at 3pm

John Kitchen (14 Jul) 01506 842188

Liverpool Cathedral at 12.30pm

Daniel Mansfield (27 Jul), Timothy Parsons (3 Aug), Marc Murray (10 Aug), Julie-Ann Carr (17 Aug), Tom Bell (24 Aug), Brink Bush (31 Aug) 0151 709 6271

Liverpool, St George's Hall at 12.45pm

Ian Tracey (16 Jul) 0151 225 6909

London E1, Christ Church Spitalfields at 1pm

Thomas Trotter (15 Jul)
01727 846126

London EC2, St Lawrence Jewry at 1pm

Catherine Ennis (2, 9, 30 Jul), Stefan Donner (16 Jul), Johannes Krahl (23 Jul) 020 8600 9478

London EC3, St Michael's Cornhill at 1pm

Mondays in July. 07799 641699

London EC4, St Dunstan-in-the-West at 1.15pm

Jamie Robertson (5 Jul), Martin Ellis (19 Jul, 23 Aug), Richard Moore (26

Jul), Andrew Furniss (2 Aug), John March (16 Aug), Adam Chillingworth (30 Aug) 020 7405 1929

London EC4, St Paul's Cathedral at 4.45pm*

Ken Cowan (6.30pm, 4 Jul), Richard Elliott (14 Jul), Peter King (21 Jul), Daniel Beckmann (6.30pm, 1 Aug), Stephen Tharp (7pm, 2 Aug), Jonathan Vaughn (4 Aug), James Orford (11 Aug), Matteo Venturini (18 Aug) 020 7236 6883

London N1, St John the Evangelist, Duncan Terrace at 7.30pm

Adrian Gunning (27 Jul) 020 7226 1218

London SE1, Southwark Cathedral at 1.10pm

Nicholas Morris (1 Jul), Peter Wright (8 Jul), Daniel Phillips (15 Jul), Harry Bramma (22 Jul), Barry Rose (29 Jul) 020 7367 6700

London SW1, Methodist Central Hall at 3pm

Margaret Phillips (21 Jul), Gerard Brooks & Dan Forshaw (sax) (18 Aug) 020 7654 3809

London SW1, Westminster Abbey at 7pm*

Isabelle Demers (16 Jul), James O'Donnell (23 Jul), Matthew Jorysz (30 Jul), Peter Holder (6 Aug), Michel Bouvard (13 Aug); Sundays at 5.45pm. 020 7222 5152

London SW1, Westminster Cathedral at 7.30pm

Matthias Havinga (24 Jul), Peter Stevens (28 Aug) 020 7798 9057

London W1, St George's, Hanover Square at 1.10pm

Jeremiah Stephenson (9 Jul), Jeremy Lloyd (6 Aug), Relf Clark (20 Aug) 020 7629 0874

London W1, Grosvenor Chapel at 1.10pm

Gordon Stewart (2 Jul), Zsombor Tóth-Vajna (16 Jul), Wyatt Smith (30 Jul), Andrew Benson-Wilson (13 Aug), Kai Krakenberg (27 Aug) 020 7499 1684

London WC2, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church at 4pm

Stefan Donner (27 Jul) 01953 688393

London WC2, St Martin-in-the-Fields at 1pm

Andrew Dewar (12 Jul) 020 7766 1130

Norwich Cathedral at 7pm*

Gereon Krafhorst (17 Jul), David Dunnett (14 Aug), Martyn Rawles (11am, 26 Aug) 01603 218306

Oxford Town Hall at 12 noon

Dan Chambers (24 Jul), Johannes Krahl (21 Aug) 01865 252195

Portsmouth Cathedral at 1.10pm

Tom Moore (11 Jul) 023 9282 3300

Reading Town Hall at 1pm

Andrzej Malitowski (15 Jul)
0118 960 6060

St Albans Cathedral at 3pm*

Andrew Lucas (4 Aug), Tom Winpenny (18 Aug), Stephen Tharp (1pm, 26 Aug); see also *News* p.13. 01727 860780

St Albans, St Peter's at 3.30pm

Christophe Mantoux (13 Jul), Dong-Il Shin (20 Jul) 01727 846126

St Edmundsbury Cathedral at 5pm

Jean-Baptiste Dupont (20 Jul)
01284 748739

Selby Abbey at 12.30pm

See feature, p.35. 01757 703123

Shaftesbury, St James at 3pm

Jonathan Vaughn (21 Jul)
01747 825986

Warwick, St Mary's at 1.15pm

Peter Irving (5 Jul), Alessandro Bianchi (12 Jul), Alex Woodrow (19 Jul), Wyatt Smith & Tracelyn Gesteland (sop) (26 Jul) 01926 403940

Wells Cathedral at 1.05pm

Matthew Redman (11 Jul), Barry Rose (8 Aug) 01749 674483

Winchester Cathedral at 4pm

Steven Grah (27 Aug) 01962 857275

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* unless otherwise stated

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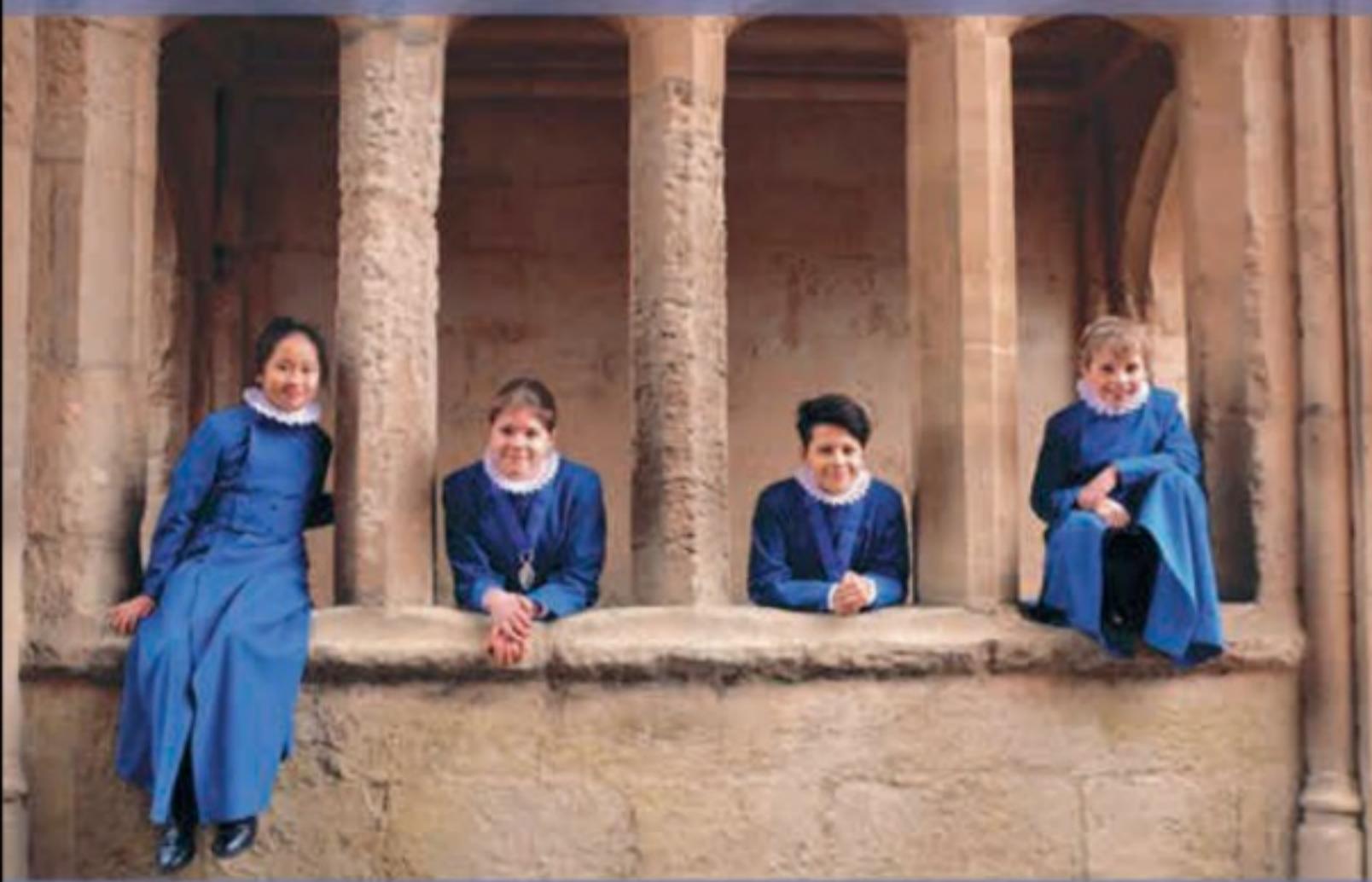
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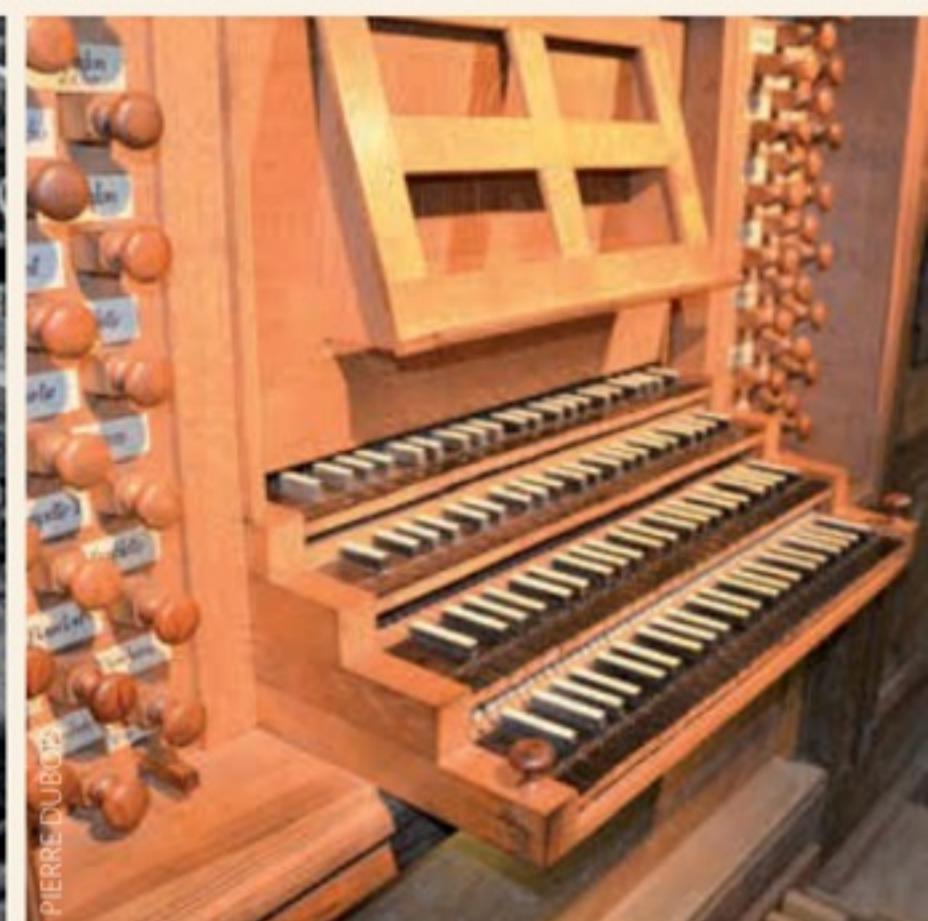
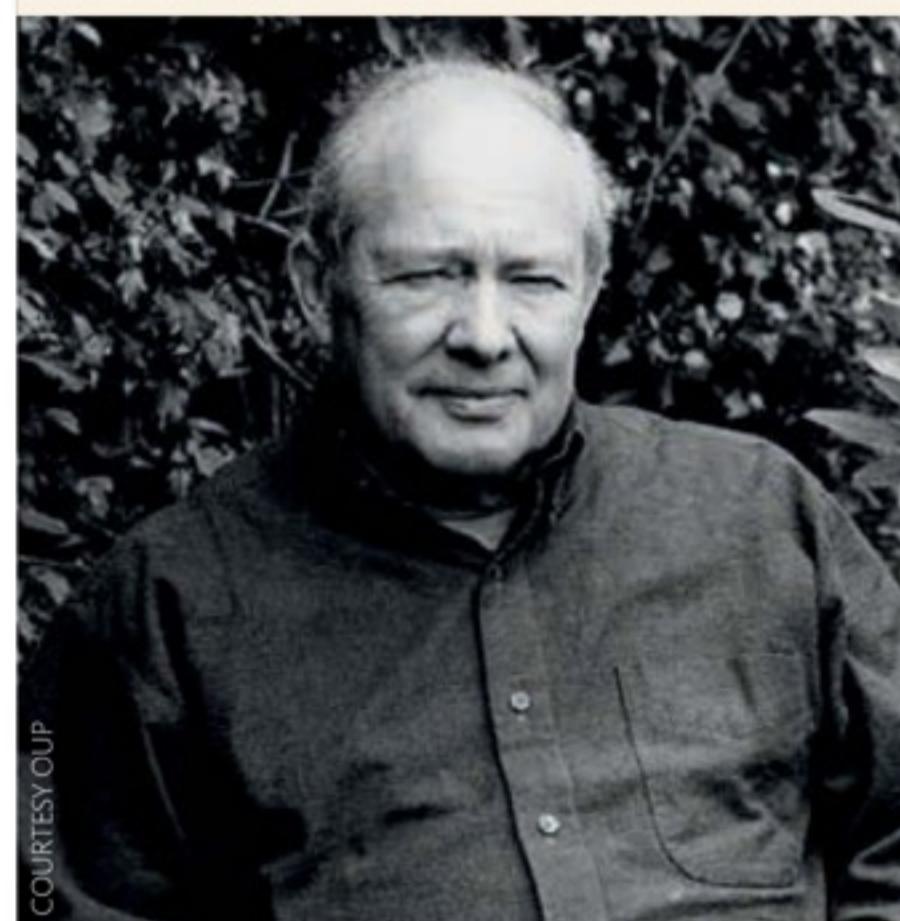
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CHOIR & ORGAN

NEXT ISSUE

SEPTEMBER 2019

ALL HAIL, THE HALLÉ

Founded in 1858, the Manchester-based choir retains its position in the highest echelons of British choral music.

BERNARD AUBERTIN

What happened when the French builder brought his idiosyncratic touch to restoring a 1748 Scherrer organ?

THE QUEEN'S SIX

Meet the a cappella male sextet, based at Windsor Castle, whose repertoire extends far beyond the choir stalls.

WHAT'S IN YOUR WORKSHOP?

A new series on organ builders and their projects launches with Harrison & Harrison.

ALUN HODDINOTT

The prolific Welsh composer was a master of many musical genres; we assess his choral œuvre.

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International news and previews, specialist reviews, readers' offers, and a supplement of Scholarships & Voice Trials.

ON RELEASE

NEW DISCS COMING OUT IN... JULY AND AUGUST 2019

The English tend to look askance at nationalism. This may be because our country has not been occupied by a foreign power for nearly 1,000 years; and also because historically we have been – and still are, in some cases – the occupier rather than the occupied. For 19th-century Finns, however, it was a very different matter: having been incorporated into the Russian Empire in 1809, from the middle of the century a strong Finnish nationalist movement gathered momentum, eventually leading to the declaration of independence in 1917.

A work of great significance in feeding a sense of Finnish national identity was the *Kalevala*. First published in 1835, it is a compilation by Elias Lönnrot of epic poetry from Karelian and Finnish mythology, comprising 50 folk stories. Among them is the troubled tale of **Kullervo**, a young man whose early sufferings led him to murder and, ultimately, suicide. His story was taken up by a young Jean Sibelius, who composed a suite of symphonic movements, now

recorded by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, with soloists Helena Juntunen and Benjamin Appl, and Lund Male Chorus, under the baton of the BBC SSO's chief conductor Thomas Dausgaard [Hyperion CDA 68248]. In his CD booklet notes, Daniel Grimley comments on the enormous impact of the premiere in 1892, 'both upon the reputation and career of its 26-year-old composer and also upon the idea of a national music in Finland ... it is impossible to perceive the shape and quality of Sibelius's later symphonies without the searing experience of *Kullervo*'.

Also on release are two discs by Cambridge college choirs. The Choir of Selwyn College, directed by Sarah MacDonald, present **The Garment of Holiness** [Regent REGCD 503], choral and organ works of British composer Iain Quinn; and the Choir of Trinity College, under the baton of Stephen Layton, sing assorted works by **Gerald Finzi**, including the sublime *Seven poems of Robert Bridges* [Hyperion CDA 68222].



THOMAS GRØNDHAL

▲ Thomas Dausgaard

In organ CDs, Thomas Trotter makes

a tour **From Palaces to Pleasure**

Gardens, performing music by diverse contemporaneous composers on the 1735 Bridge organ in Christ Church, Spitalfields [Regent REGCD 526]; Signum are releasing an 8-CD box-set of recordings made by Joseph Nolan of **Charles-Marie Widor: Complete Organ Works** [SIGCD 596]; and Alexander Ffitch has already garnered a five-star review (see p.89) for his Divine Art CD **Transformations** [DDA 25193]. ■



CHORAL CDS

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956):

Choral works

Trinity College Choir Cambridge/

Layton

Hyperion CDA 68222

The Garment of Holiness

- Iain Quinn choral and organ works

Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge, Shanna Hart & Alexander

Goodwin (org)/MacDonald Regent REGCD 503

Lully: Dies Irae; De

Profundis; Te Deum

Chœur de Chambre de Namur, Cappella

Mediterranea, Millenium Orchestra/Alarcón

Alpha 444

Mozart: Requiem

Sols, La Chapelle Royale, Collegium Vocale Gent, Orchestre des Champs-

Elysées/Herreweghe

Harmonia mundi HMM 931620

Priez pour nous (Dupré,

Boulanger, Demessieux, Poulenc)

Romsey Abbey Choir, Colin Walsh (org, St Ouen, Rouen)/Richford Regent REGCD 538

Sibelius: Kullervo

Helena Juntunen (s), Benjamin Appl (bar), Lund Male Chorus, BBC Scottish SO/Dausgaard Hyperion CDA 68248

ORGAN CDS

Bach: The Toccatas BWV 910-916

Mahan Esfahani (hpschd)

Hyperion CDA 68244

From Palaces to Pleasure

Gardens (J.C. Bach, Corelli, Handel, Hook, Pepusch, Russell, Stanley)

Thomas Trotter, 1735 Richard Bridge organ, Christchurch, Spitalfields Regent REGCD 526

Portals - Carson Cooman Organ

Music, vol.11

Erik Simmons

Divine Art DDA 25195

Transformations (Jongen, Liszt, Dove)

Alexander Ffitch, Cheltenham College Chapel

Divine Art DDA 25193

Charles-Marie Widor: Complete Organ Works

Joseph Nolan (La Madeleine, Paris; Saint-Sernin, Toulouse; Saint-François-de-Sales, Lyon) Signum SIGCD 596 (8 CDs)

DVDS

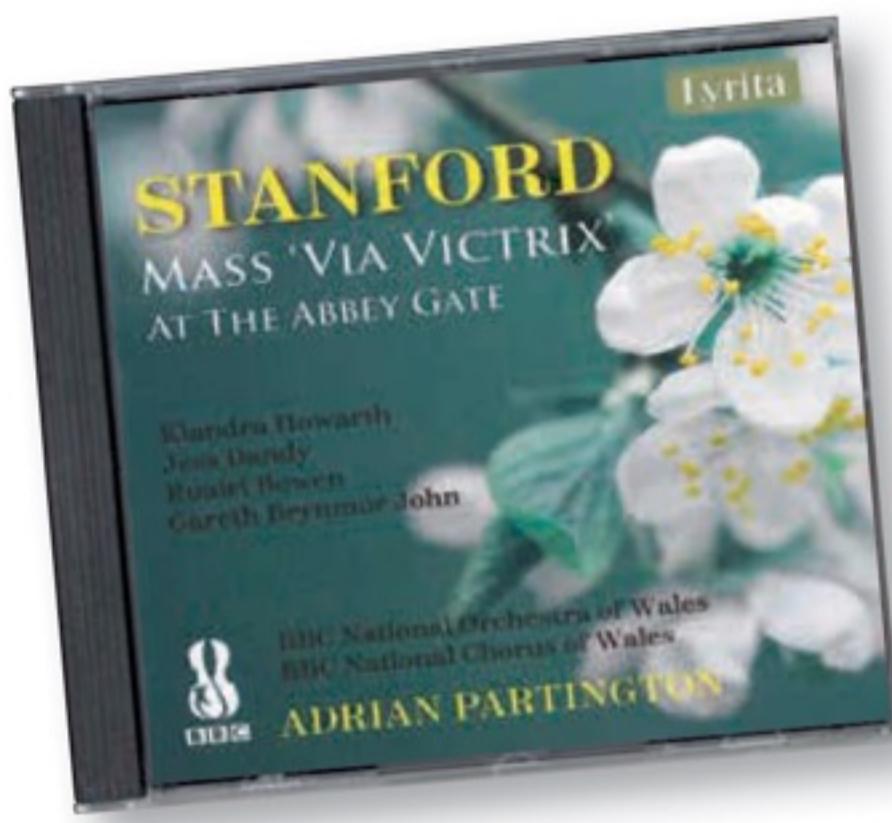
Lully: Te Deum; Biber: Missa Salisburgensis

Pages of the Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, Collegium Vocale 1704, Collegium 1704/Luks CVS 012

REVIEWS

Rating: ★★★★★ Highly recommended ★★★ Very good ★★★ Good ★★ Average ★ Poor

STAR REVIEW



STANFORD: MASS 'VIA VICTRIX'; AT THE ABBEY GATE

Kiandra Howarth (s), Jess Dandy (a), Ruairi Bowen (t), Gareth Brynmor John (bar), BBC National Chorus of Wales, BBC National Orchestra of Wales / Adrian Partington (dir)

Lyrita SRCD 382 [79:57]

★★★★★

Stanford's substantial Mass 'Via Victrix 1914-1918' was intended as a work of thanksgiving for the allies' victory in the Great War. Dedicated to those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country, it was

'An impressive reading'

the first in a chain of works by British composers commemorating the war dead – Foulds's *A World Requiem* (1921), Delius's *Requiem* (premiered 1922) and Bliss's *Morning Heroes* (1930) would follow. All these works have received modern recordings, but it has taken until now for Stanford's 'Via Victrix' Mass to reach CD. Symphonically paced and nuanced in its construction, Stanford's Mass receives an impressive reading from Adrian Partington, his four soloists, and the wonderful voices of the BBC National Chorus of Wales with BBC NOW. Thanks to the editorial work and tireless advocacy of Stanford scholar Jeremy Dibble, this CD again makes available an important British choral work that has lain largely forgotten for over a century. The appropriate fill-up work is another premiere recording: *At the Abbey Gate*, composed in 1920 in response to a poem by Charles John Darling published in the *Times* as part of an article concerning the ceremonial interment of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey.

PHILIP REED

▼ 'Wonderful voices': the BBC National Chorus of Wales



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STAR REVIEW

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ORGAN CDS

JEAN GUILLOU: ORGAN WORKS VOL.1

Zuzana Ferjenčíková, St Martin, Dudelange, Luxembourg
MDG 906 2089-6 [72:11]

★★★



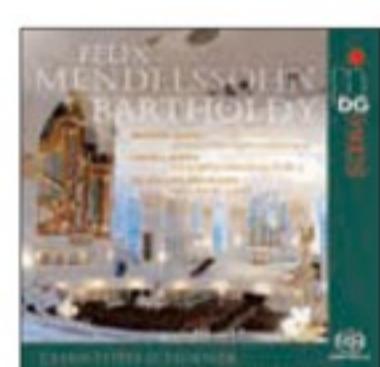
With the death of Jean Guillou earlier this year, we lost perhaps the most remarkable of organ visionaries. Zuzana Ferjenčíková, a former student of Guillou, had already embarked on a CD series of his works and this first volume contains three original pieces alongside Guillou's transcription of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an exhibition*. Ferjenčíková begins with Guillou's first published work, the *Fantaisie*, and here I found the playing rather too ponderous (indeed, the performance takes almost a third longer than Guillou's own recording) and lacking the driving energy one is used to hearing from this composer and his music. *Säya* ('Blue bird') is a more successful step into Guillou's poetic dreamworld. The excellent notes reveal a powerful intellectual and emotional understanding of Guillou's œuvre, and it will be interesting to see how this series evolves.

RUPERT GOUGH

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY: ORGAN WORKS

Christoph Schoener, organs of St Michael's Church, Hamburg
MDG 949 2096-6 [78:03]

★★★★



There is no shortage of recent recordings and retrospectives of Mendelssohn's organ music, but none quite like this. As with his previous MDG recordings, Christoph Schoener takes full advantage of the 'organ complex' at St Michael's. All four recently built or restored organs are heard individually for the first four works. Then Karg-Elert's arrangement of *Trauermarsch* illustrates what dramatic effects can be achieved by combining the vast Steinmeyer of 1962 with the 1914 Marcussen and a newly installed large Fernwerk in the ceiling, enhanced all the more if you can listen with an SACD player. All is fine in conventional stereo, though, and the intricate detail of the six Preludes & Fugues for piano can be fully appreciated despite the aural perspective.

RUPERT GOUGH

JOAN CABANILLES: KEYBOARD MUSIC VOL.3

Timothy Roberts, 1724 Salanova/2010 Grenzing organ, Sant Jaume, Vila-real; Anon 17th-century organ, Banyalbufar, Mallorca; Flemish-style harpsichord by Michael Johnson
Toccata Classics TOCC 0451 [70:49]

★★★★



This third volume of Timothy Roberts's survey of the vast complete keyboard works of the Valencia master Joan (or Juan) Cabanilles is another welcome addition to the recorded corpus of yet unknown, remarkable 17th- and 18th-century

music from the Iberian peninsula. Roberts's monumental undertaking demands respect and, in general, his playing is persuasive. Occasionally I find his touch, especially in Vila-real (awkward action?), a little laboured, the weak beat not always differentiated, the (often fiendish) ornamentation and passagework lacking the 'quicksilver' quality it seems to require. The expressive balance in his harpsichord playing is perhaps more natural. In addition, the recorded sound is uncomfortably direct, the eight-second audible decay of the Vila-real church quite a shock at the end of the first track. Nevertheless, there are many extraordinary sounds here and some extraordinary music; I especially enjoyed the extended 'dos tiples' *Tiento de cuarto tono* with its amazing sense of rhythmic accumulation. Roberts's extensive research extends to hypothetical reconstructions for two manuals of the tientos for divided keyboard (*tientos partidos*). These may originally have been conceived for two manuals of longer compass, later being adapted for single, divided keyboard by copyists with more limited resources than those available to Cabanilles at Valencia Cathedral. It's a great shame that no images of the organs heard here are included in the booklet, but this series is certainly one to watch.

CHRIS BRAGG

LE POISSON MAGIQUE - ORGAN WORKS BY JOHN MCCABE

Tom Winpenny, St Albans Cathedral
Resonus RES10144 [71:43]

★★★★



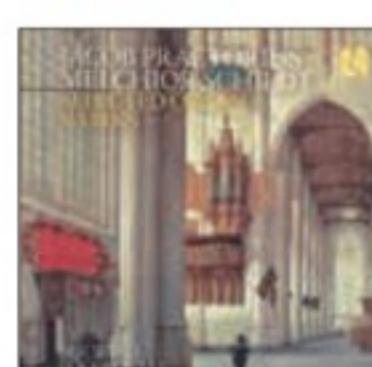
The 'Fish Magic' relates to a painting by the German painter Paul Klee, and surrealism is also a label that one can apply to the music of John McCabe, particularly the earlier works. The more familiar organ pieces were all written in the early 1960s, but McCabe turned again to the organ in his latter years for the *Carol-Preludes* of 2008 and *Esperanza*, composed for the 2010 St Albans International Organ Festival. Given McCabe's stature as a composer (and pianist) over a long career, I was surprised to read that only one of the works on this disc had been recorded before. Tom Winpenny is therefore to be congratulated for producing such a definitive testament to McCabe's work, recorded just before the composer's death in 2015.

RUPERT GOUGH

JACOB PRAETORIUS AND MELCHIOR SCHILDT:
ORGAN WORKS

Bernard Foccroulle, Stellwagen organ (1637), Jacobikirche, Lübeck
Ricercar RIC400 [68:27]

★★★★



This is a very elegant recording indeed of music by two pupils of the Orpheus of Amsterdam, Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck. Bernard Foccroulle's distinguished career as a composer and interpreter of both early and contemporary organ music has occurred alongside a spectacular administrative career during which he has been director, successively, of the 'Munt'

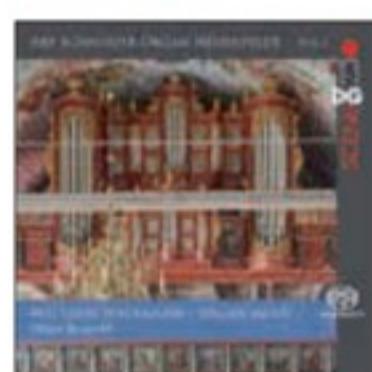
Opera in Brussels and the international festival at Aix-en-Provence. His mercurial playing here, more poetic than monumental, matches the burnished lustre of the Stellwagen organ in Lübeck very well, with the four original short-length reeds a particular joy, whether as soloists or in consort. The highlight is Foccroulle's own completion of Praetorius's Chorale Fantasia on 'Durch Adams Fall', a rare example of the genre specified for three manuals and with particularly virtuosic echo passages. Warmly recommended.

CHRIS BRAGG

MATTHIAS WECKMANN: ORGAN WORKS

Hilger Kesphohl, Schnitger organ (1688), St Pankriatus, Neuenfeld MDG 906 2109-6 [72:04]

★★★



Neuenfeld is a special place, indelibly linked with Arp Schnitger, who is buried in the church's nave and immortalised in the street names. Until recently, his 1688 organ was obscured by layers of 19th- and 20th-century intervention. The 2015

restoration/reconstruction, unusually for organs in that area by Kristian Wegscheider, has returned it firmly to the Hamburg organ-pilgrimage route, and the long-standing threat by Airbus to flatten the village in order to build a new runway at their adjacent factory seems now to have abated. The present organist, Hilger Kesphohl, here presents a survey of some of Weckmann's sublime shorter compositions and his sense of the capricious rhetoric of the free works is especially convincing. True, the lack of a manual 16ft reed prevents the characteristic Weckmann 'Sonaten' registration (for example, in the first verse of 'Ach, wir armen Sünder') and perhaps Kesphohl's desire to show off the organ leads to some uncharacteristic registrations (a Toccata played on 8ft flutes, for example), although making any assertions about registration in the north German repertoire is, admittedly, fraught with difficulty. His final offering, the *Magnificat II toni*, leaves off where the final recording of the unrestored organ began, a splendid 2004 IFO disc by Kesphohl's illustrious predecessor, Karl-Bernhardin Kropf. Comparison is fascinating and illustrates well how much beauty has been gained, not least in the magnificent new reeds.

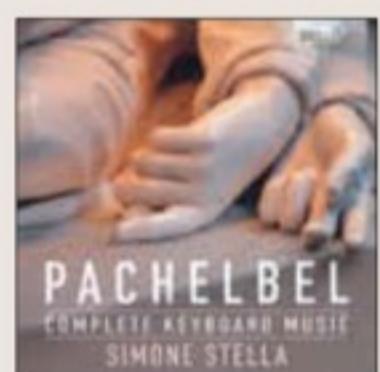
CHRIS BRAGG

►

PACHELBEL: COMPLETE KEYBOARD MUSIC

Simone Stella, Pinchi-Škrabl organ (2013), Basilica of San Giorgio, Ferrara; harpsichord by William Horn after Joannes Ruckers Brilliant Classics 95623 (13 CDs) [15:01:04]

★★★



Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706) is a significant figure in the history of baroque keyboard music, but (as far as I know) this is the first complete-works recording, and Simone Stella is to be congratulated on the achievement. As composer and organist at the Predigerkirche in Erfurt (1678-90) and at the most important church of St Sebald in his native Nuremberg (1695-1706; he was appointed by invitation rather than by competition), Pachelbel seems to have been required, contractually, to continually improve his skills. As a Protestant organist, he was thoroughly steeped in Catholic repertoires, and his three publications of 1678, 1683 and 1699 may well have had a pedagogical purpose.

Pachelbel was a prolific composer of over 200 keyboard works, whose genres include many types of chorale preludes, variations, about 100 fugues, toccatas, preludes, fantasias, ricercars, chaconnes and the well-known Arias from *Hexachordum Apollinis*. In addition, there are more than 20 dance suites, of which only three can now be fully authenticated. However, Stella plays them all on the first four CDs, together with the *Hexachordum Arias*, on a modern harpsichord after Ruckers. Besides the many varied keys, though, the suites do have a consistency and a limited range of expression, and performances could have been enlivened through the use of a wider variety of harpsichords. To play them all on one instrument, rather than choosing a range of

keyboards – virginals, clavichords, Italian, French and German harpsichords (all of which Pachelbel would surely have been familiar with) – is somewhat of a restriction.

Conversely, the organ used here has much greater possibilities in variety of tonal colours, and Stella uses it to fine effect in the many fugues and chorale variations – the music needs it. Despite its traditional Italian case, the three-manual and pedal 30-stop organ has more to do with baroque Germany than Italy, and as it is tuned in unequal temperament, it serves the music extremely well. This is particularly evident in the fugues which, although short, are played on a very wide range of registrations that are always captivating. It is not known how the *Magnificat* fugues were used liturgically, for the fugue subjects are quite independent of the liturgical chants (further research needed here!).

Pachelbel's technique for toccatas is also consistent; based on pedal notes, the keyboard figurations of parallel 3rds, 6ths and 10ths predominate. Although not difficult to improvise, Pachelbel is always surprising in his modulatory shifts and textural changes. Generally, the music is not as daring as his north German contemporaries Buxtehude and Bruhns; rather, Pachelbel's works are finely constructed within modest scope and overall length. His greatest skill is evident in the variations, particularly in the Arias from *Hexachordum Apollinis*.

It is a pity that Pachelbel's dates are incorrectly printed on all 13 CD sleeves, but the collection should be regarded in the same way as an encyclopedia – hardly to be listened to in one sitting (lasting over 15 hours), but dipped into for authoritative performances of some of the best south German keyboard music of the period.

DAVID PONSFORD

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THE ANVIL

AN ELEGY FOR PETERLOO

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Libretto by Michael Symmons Roberts

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the BBC Singers and the Hallé choirs

Commissioned by Manchester International Festival, the BBC Philharmonic and BBC Radio 3.
Produced by Manchester International Festival and the BBC Philharmonic. Photo: Manuel Streit

11 July
The Bridgewater Hall

THE HALLÉ

SHOSTAKOVICH

SYMPHONY NO. 7

Shostakovich's Symphony No.7
Conducted by Sir Mark Elder

Produced by Manchester International Festival and the Hallé.
Image: Deutsche Fotothek

15–20 July
Royal Exchange Theatre

TAO OF GLASS

PHILIP GLASS
& PHELIM
MCDERMOTT

Commissioned by Manchester International Festival, Improbable, Perth Festival, Ruhrfestspiele Recklinghausen and
Carolina Performing Arts – University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Produced by Manchester International Festival,
Improbable and the Royal Exchange Theatre. Photo: Christian Sturm

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◀ BRIGHT VISION

Ivan Goff (Uilleann pipes & Irish flute), Renée Anne Louprette, Mander organ (1993), St Ignatius Loyola, New York [No catalogue number] [56:50]

★★★★



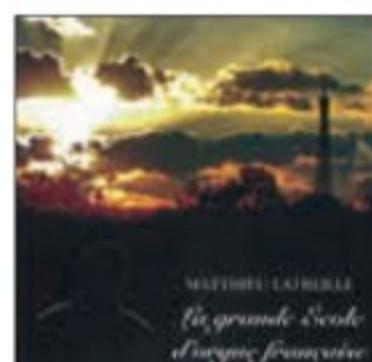
Bright Vision is a demo disc for a more unusual pairing of organ with Irish pipes. Rather than the organ taming this traditional Irish music into a classical idiom, Renée Anne Louprette cleverly uses the organ to create more of a backing track of complementary sounds and harmonies, augmenting the natural drones of the Irish bagpipes and sometimes providing seamlessly blended counter-melodies. *Mirage* is the most compelling work, mixing eastern European rhythms and melodies. There are two versions of the title track *Aisling Gheal* ('Bright Vision'), the second, by Louprette, recalling the timbres of Olivier Messiaen. This combination of instruments will not be to everyone's taste, but the work of the Louprette-Goff duo here is clever and engaging.

RUPERT GOUGH

LA GRANDE ÉCOLE D'ORGUE FRANÇAISE

Matthieu Latreille, Casavant organ (1920/2006), Église des Saints-Anges-Gardiens, Lachine (Quebec) Aoedé AE 85320 [59:30]

★★★★



This is a fine introduction to the late 19th- and 20th-century French school, comprising a selection of major works by Dupré, Vierne, Tournemire, Alain, Nadia Boulanger, Duruflé and André Fleury. The Canadian four-manual 65-stop organ, with 16ft, 8ft and 4ft chamade reeds, has terrific character in these generous acoustics, and the enormous range of dynamics is captured from a recording position down in the church (I guess), emphasising ambience and effect at the expense of forensic clarity – very appropriate for much of this music. The playing is virtuoso in the best sense. Only the minimal liner notes are a disappointment.

DAVID PONSFORD

TRANSFORMATIONS: A SELECTION FOR ORGAN

Alexander Ffinch, Norman & Beard organ, Cheltenham College Chapel Divine Art DDA 25193 [62:05]

★★★★★



Alexander Ffinch puts Cheltenham College Chapel's organ through its paces in fine style in this first recording since the 1897 Norman & Beard instrument was given a major overhaul by Harrison & Harrison in 2017. Its symphonic heft is vividly felt in the variegated, muscular poetry of Jongen's *Sonata eroïca*, its broad colour palette and dynamic range lit up by Liszt's *Fantasia & Fugue on the Chorale 'Ad nos, ad salutarem undam'*. Ffinch traverses its constant transformations of tone and

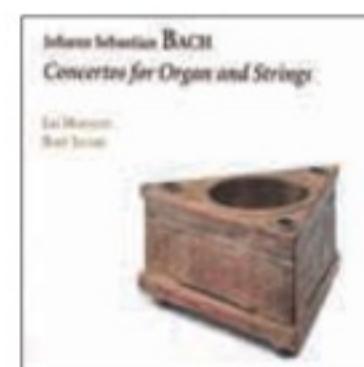
temperament with the agility of an Olympic slalom skier, finding zen-like stillness in the translucent textures of its middle movement and thunderous directness in its stirring finale. There's vital advocacy, too, for Jonathan Dove's rhythmically buoyant, delightfully animated *The Dancing Pipes* in its first recording.

MICHAEL QUINN

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH: CONCERTOS FOR ORGAN AND STRINGS

Bart Jacobs (org), L'Église Notre-Dame et Saint-Léogare de Bornem, Belgium; Les Muffatti Ramée RAM 1804 [79:59]

★★★★★



'I didn't know Bach wrote any organ concertos,' you may say – and indeed he didn't. However, Bart Jacobs provides a compelling case for how Bach may have acted as an organ soloist in the performance of some sinfonias, based on the organ's use as an obbligato instrument in many of his cantatas. Jacobs has reconstructed four concertos and three sinfonias from cantata movements as well as existing concertos for oboe, violin and harpsichord. Once over the shock of hearing familiar music in very different circumstances, the performances are thoroughly enjoyable and rather convincing. There is rarely a bar's rest in Jacobs's organ parts, yet he deftly guides us through some of Bach's finest moments, ably propelled by intelligent and energetic playing from Les Muffatti (although they occasionally disturb the tempo by pushing forward). Sadly, detailed notes on the reconstructions are only available in French and German.

RUPERT GOUGH

CHORAL CDS

DONIZETTI: VESPER PSALMS

Andrea Lauren Brown (s), Anna Feith (s), Johanna Krödel (a), Veronika Sammer (a), Markus Schäfer (t), Christoph Rosenbaum (t), Daniel Ochoa (b), Niklas Mallmann (b), Simon Mayr Chorus, Concerto de Bassus / Franz Hauk (dir) Naxos 8.573910 [66:54]

★★★★



These amiable settings of the traditional psalm texts for Vespers, here given in their premiere recording, date from the earliest period of Donizetti's career, when he was still a student. Vestiges of the dramatic flair that would characterise the later celebrated opera composer can be detected: a neat turn of melody and an imaginative ear for orchestral colour, notably for the woodwind, with one delicious example being the duet for soprano and clarinet in the 'Tecum principium'. Hauk steers his forces with purpose coupled to a real sense of early 19th-century style. The many soloists are all fit for purpose and the Simon Mayr Chorus makes the most of its four contributions.

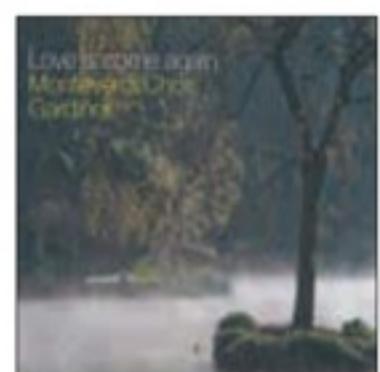
PHILIP REED

◀ LOVE IS COME AGAIN

Monteverdi Choir / John Eliot Gardiner (dir)

Soli Deo Gloria SDG 731 [67:37]

★★★★



A very personal and deeply emotional recreation of the musical sequence he designed for his mother's *Springhead Easter Play* in 1963, John Eliot Gardiner steers his voices through nine centuries of repertoire, joined here and there by the English Baroque Soloists. Solo and ensemble singing of exemplary quality adorn a sequence full of contrast: from medieval monody via all kinds of early polyphony (Gesualdo, Cornysh, Taverner, Morley, Byrd, Tallis, Gabrieli, Schütz etc) to Rheinberger, reworked Benjamin Britten, and even traditional material. Some interesting arrangements and mash-ups also appear in this most unusual and welcome Easter meditation.

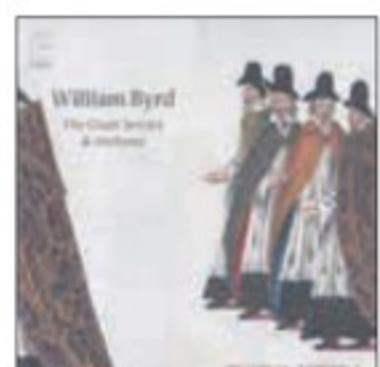
REBECCA TAVENER

WILLIAM BYRD: THE GREAT SERVICE & ANTHEMS

Odyssean Ensemble / Colm Carey (dir)

Linn Records CKD 608 [59:25]

★★★★★



Beautifully rounded sound on this recording combines with the freshness, vivacity and energy of very fine performances, shaped with taste, understanding and lovely legato lines by Colm Carey who, turning his hand more to choral directing nowadays, truly owns this repertoire. Here is Byrd composing for Protestants: and what wondrous stuff it is – both a magnificent expression of the aesthetic liturgical leanings encouraged by Elizabeth I, and an anti-Calvinist celebration of quality music as God's gift and blessing. The excellent liner notes include a spot of fascinating organ geekery for those that want it.

REBECCA TAVENER

LOCUS ISTE

Choir of St John's College, Cambridge, Laura van der Heijden (vc),

Glen Dempsey (org) / Andrew Nethsingha (dir)

Signum Classics SGC 06057 [73:52]

★★★



Nipping Parry's *Blest pair of sirens* off the end of this CD and cutting it back to a generous hour would have made a more intriguing set from one of the best college choirs around. As it stands, it's a bit of a slog and perhaps too self-consciously mixed in approach. John Tavener's *The Lamb* doesn't really sit well alongside Stanford's *Justorum Animae*, and the premiere pieces, by Giles Swayne (the lovely, surprising *Adam lay ibounden*), Christopher Robinson's *Jesu, grant me this, I pray* and the very young Alex Woolf's *O vos omnes* are a bit lost past the mid-point of the disc. The title piece is Bruckner's, and it might have gone first. Britten, Poulenc and Rachmaninov are also in there, so no complaints about Nethsingha not putting his singers through their paces.

BRIAN MORTON

CARL LOEWE: DAS SÜHNOPFER DES NEUEN BUNDES

Monika Mauch (s), Ulrike Malotta (m-s), Georg Poplutz (t), Andreas Burkhardt (bar), Arcis-Vocalisten München, Barockorchester L'arpa Festante / Thomas Gropper (dir)

Oehms Classics OC 1706 (2CDs) [62:01; 41:11]

★★★★



Still retaining a hold in the repertoire as a composer of lieder, Carl Loewe (1796-1869) also penned six operas, two symphonies, two piano concertos and more than 15 oratorios both sacred and secular – all of which have fallen into obscurity. *Das Sühnopfer des neuen Bundes* ('The Atonement of the New Covenant') dates from 1847. It is a substantial Passion oratorio whose text was derived largely from Matthew's and John's gospel accounts of Jesus's Passion, as well as chorales and free passages of poetry. While Bach's example can be detected, so too can Handel's influence be heard in the grander scenes; and, of course, one is constantly reminded of Mendelssohn's soundworld. Thomas Gropper and his forces take a straightforward approach to Loewe's score, with the chorus delivering their contribution with conviction and an attractive, even tone. With decent if not outstanding soloists, this release is certainly worth investigating.

PHILIP REED

LISZT: VIA CRUCIS; SALVE REGINA; VATER UNSER; AVE VERUM CORPUS

Collegium Vocale Gent / Reinbert de Leeuw (dir)

Alpha-Classics Alpha 390 [50:12]

★★★★★



Composed towards the end of Liszt's life, *Via Crucis* remained unperformed until the 1920s. It is a deeply personal work, written when the composer was suffering from depression and physical illness, which offers a meditation on the Stations of the Cross. The work's intense atmosphere is beautifully caught here by pianist-conductor Reinbert de Leeuw and the perfectly balanced vocal forces of Collegium Vocale Gent. With the addition of three Latin motets, this CD is a fine achievement and presents a more unusual kind of Passontide music to the usual offerings.

PHILIP REED

JAMES MACMILLAN: ONE EQUAL MUSIC – PSALMS, POEMS AND FOLKSONGS

Elysian Singers, Alexandra Caldron (vn) / Sam Laughton (dir)

Signum Classics SIGCD 575 [64:19]

★★★★★



The Elysian Singers of London, well known for their adventurous programming, here return to the music of Sir James MacMillan, who celebrates his 60th birthday this summer. The Singers' rounded, bright tone under director Sam Laughton is nicely captured by Signum in this release, which explores MacMillan's wide and varied contribution to the choral

medium. From the blazing 'choral fanfare' *Blow the trumpet in the new moon* to a major setting of Psalm 51, this CD, while obviously a timely celebration of one of the UK's leading composers, is also a fine introduction to MacMillan's œuvre.

PHILIP REED

DESires: A SONG OF SONGS COLLECTION

ORA Singers / Suzi Digby (dir)

Harmonia mundi HMM 905316 [71:20]

★★★★★



The common thread in this sensuous programme is settings of words from the Song of Songs. Suzi Digby selects both the ancient and the modern, with pieces by, for example, Brumel and Victoria sitting alongside Gabriel Jackson, Francis Grier and Jonathan Dove. The 14 works recorded here make for a rich and heady mix and we should be grateful to Digby and her superb ORA Singers for what proves to be a fascinating musical journey. Digby coaxes a simply gorgeous, all-enveloping tone from her 18-strong choir that draws in the listener as the CD progresses. Warmly recommended.

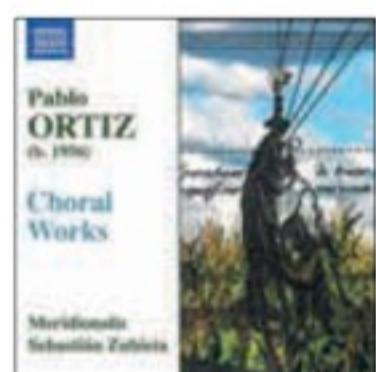
PHILIP REED

PABLO ORTIZ: CHORAL WORKS

Meridionalis, Taka Kigawa (celesta) / Sebastián Zubieta (dir)

Naxos 8.579026 [52:31]

★★★★★



Born in Buenos Aires in 1956, Ortiz is a composer who seems to function very largely in the past, but one constructed very much on his personal terms. So there are settings here of Ovid and of Thomas Hardy (the lovely *Darkling Thrush* for SATB), as well as the remarkable *Teatro Martín Fierro Suite*, a set of miniatures after Sergio Chejfec, an exact contemporary, performed by three sopranos. The originality of *Maizal del gregoriano* ('Gregorian Cornfield') in which the choir is accompanied by celesta isn't simply a novelty: it's a genuinely remarkable and effective piece of chant, ancient and modern at the same time. Likewise the mournfully singable *Leaving Limerick*. Anyone unfamiliar with Ortiz's work will be drawn by its intensely rhythmic quality. Gesualdo is said to be an influence, but so well combined with native strains as to be almost incidental now. Beautifully sung throughout and a pristine recording.

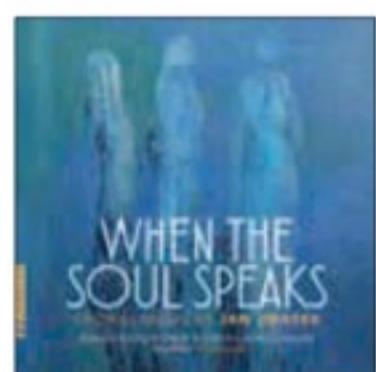
BRIAN MORTON

JAN JIRÁSEK: WHEN THE SOUL SPEAKS

Bonifantes Boys Choir, Czech Soloist Consort / Jan Mišek (dir)

Navona NV 6205 [46:00]

★★★



The composer has a long association with the Bonifantes Boys Choir and there's a slightly routine, almost pragmatic air to the music and the singing on this recording. There's no doubting the sincerity of both and there are moments in the

Sanctus of *Mondi Parallel* when the singing rises to great heights, but the atmosphere is heuristic rather than transcendent and the overall effect a little earthbound. That said, it's a lovely recording, made in two of the finest halls in Hradec Králové, one of the most musical locations in all Bohemia, and the attempts in *Mondi Parallel* to bring together texts from various world religions is an admirable one.

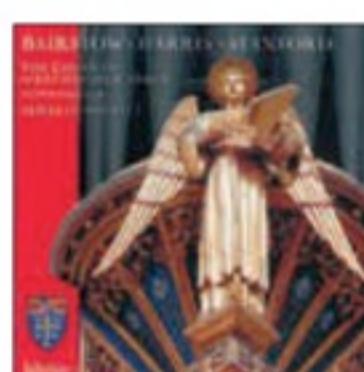
BRIAN MORTON

BAIRSTOW • HARRIS • STANFORD

Choir of Westminster Abbey, Peter Holder (org) / James O'Donnell (dir)

Hyperion CDA 68259 [75:40]

★★★★★



Most of the works by three giants of the Anglican tradition on this marvellous disc can be heard frequently in cathedrals and churches around the world, but James O'Donnell and his superb choir treat each one as though it were a rare gem. The unison singing of the trebles in Stanford's *A Song of Wisdom* is exquisite, while the full choir relishes both the drama and the wistful beauty of famous anthems such as Bairstow's *Blessed city* and Harris's *Bring us, O Lord God*. Peter Holder's eloquent accompaniments provide seamless support and splendidly demonstrate the range and colour of the Abbey organ.

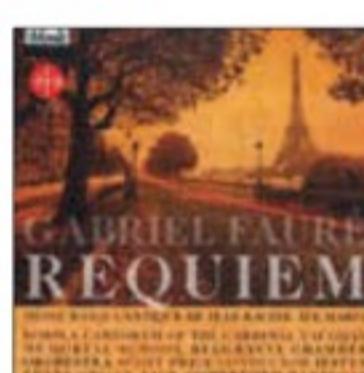
CLARE STEVENS

GABRIEL FAURÉ: REQUIEM

Jack Comerford (bar), Schola Cantorum of the Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School, Belgravia Chamber Orchestra, Iestyn Evans (org) / Scott Price (dir)

Herald HAVPCD 405 [53:37]

★★★



The highlight of this all-Fauré disc for me was the *Messe basse*, beautifully sung by the trebles of Cardinal Vaughan School's all-male Schola Cantorum, and equally beautifully accompanied by Iestyn Evans on the Willis organ of St Jude's, Hampstead. Conductor Scott Price chooses speeds for the Requiem that are too slow for my taste, inhibiting the momentum of the piece, while the choir's diction is not always clear. However, their blend is excellent and there is a real sense of reverence about their performances. It is remarkable that a state school can field a large team of boys who sing as well as this.

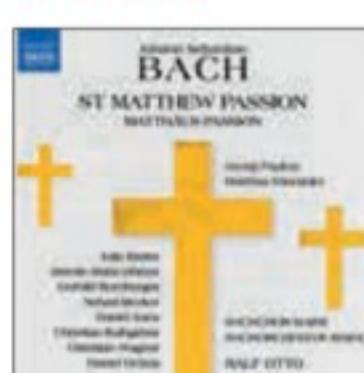
CLARE STEVENS

J.S. BACH: ST MATTHEW PASSION

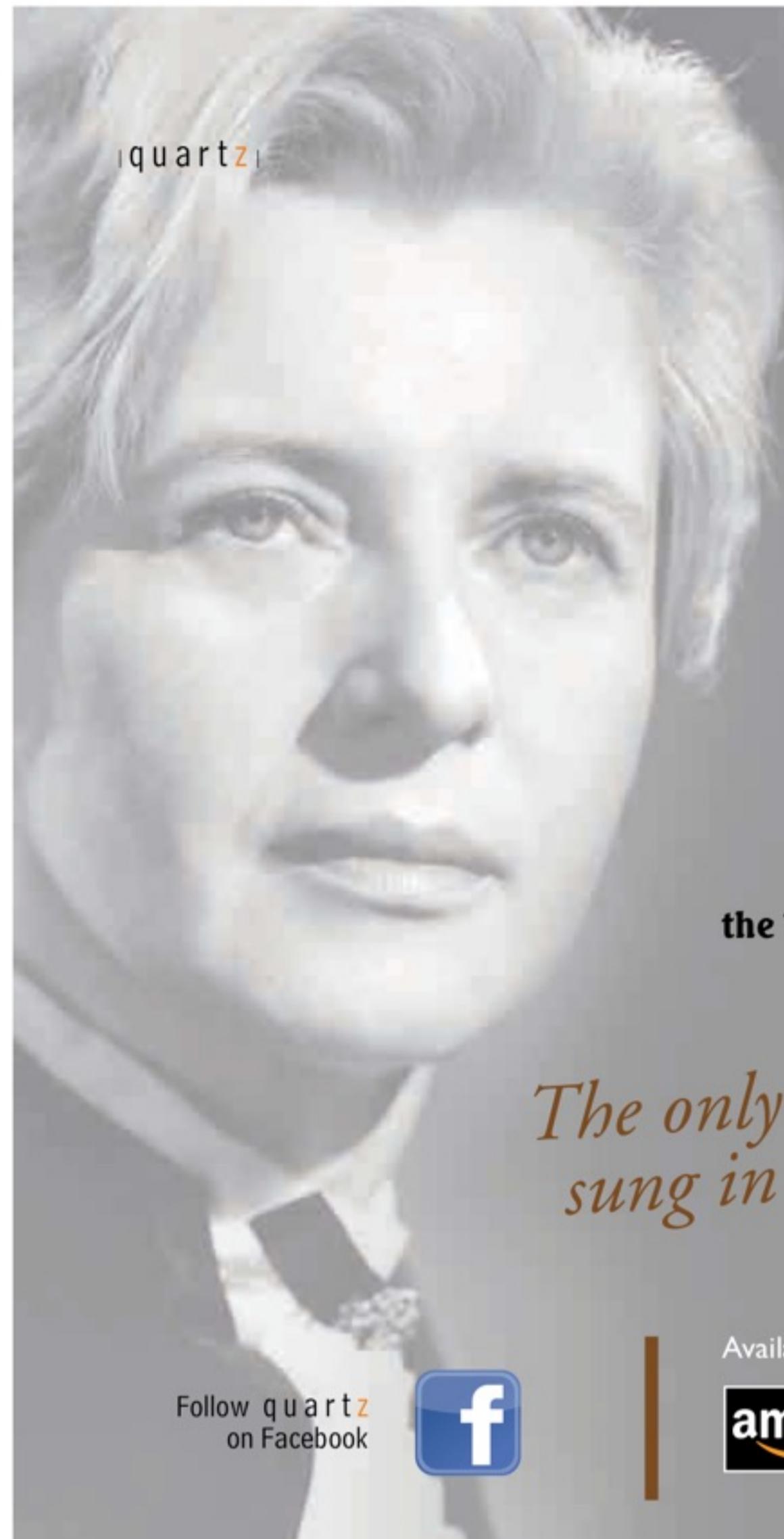
Georg Poplutz (Evangelist), Matthias Winckler (Christus), Bachchor Mainz, Bachorchester Mainz / Ralf Otto (dir)

Naxos 8.574036-8 [2:50:35]

★★★★★



This immaculate recording features a choir of 45 singers with a separate team of 10 soloists, including female altos, who share the arias, in addition to Georg Poplutz and Matthias Winckler who take the roles of the Evangelist



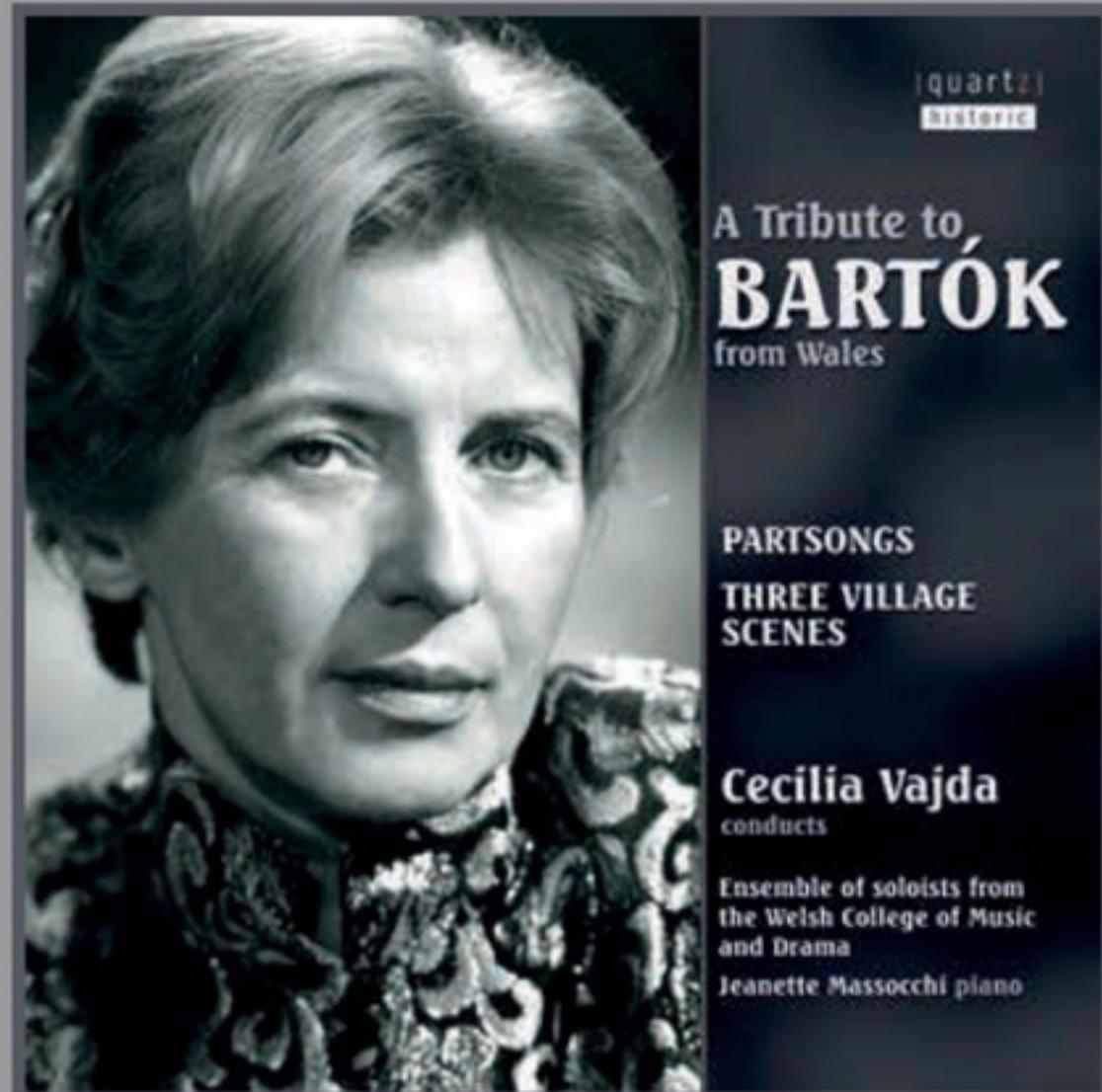
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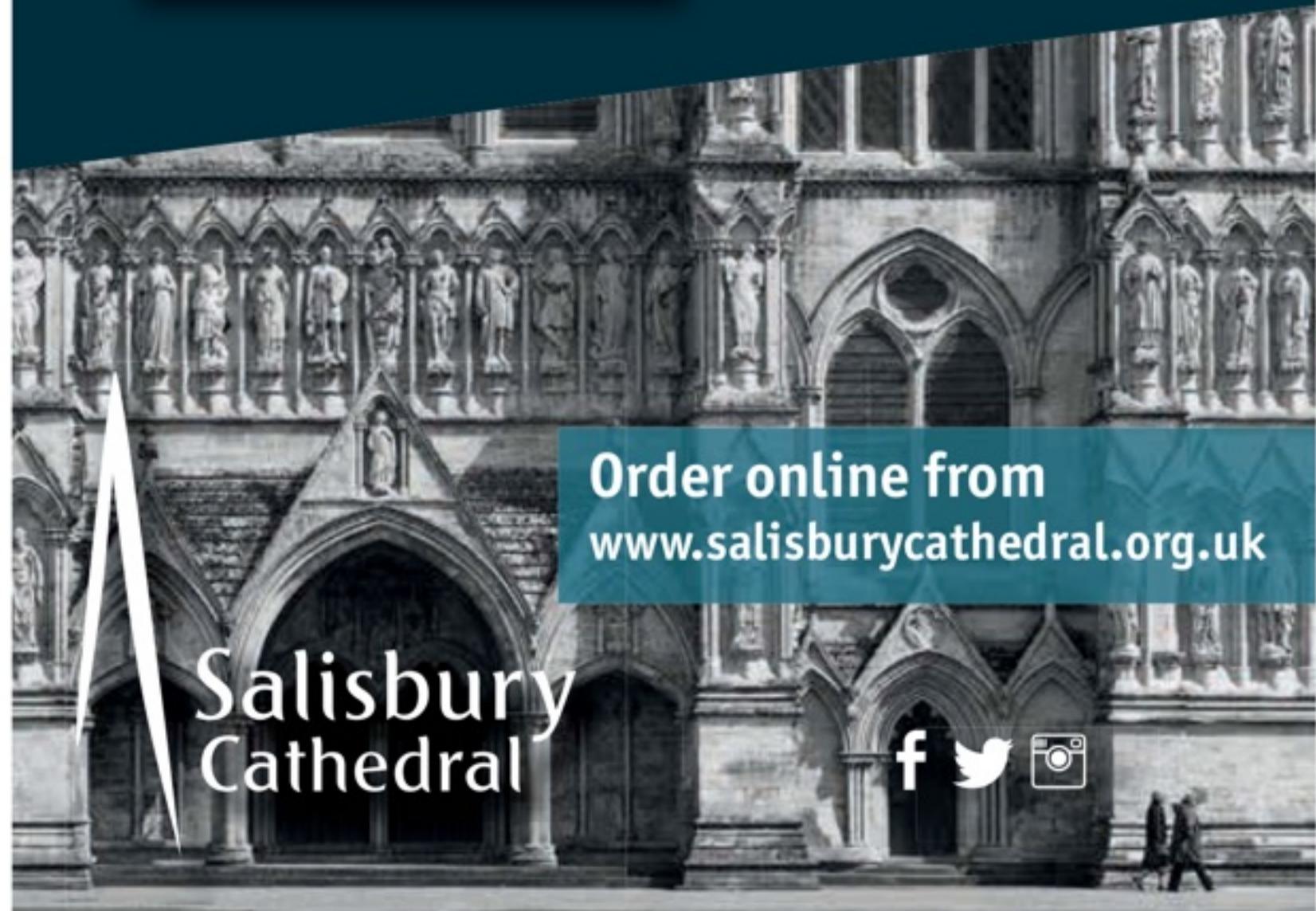
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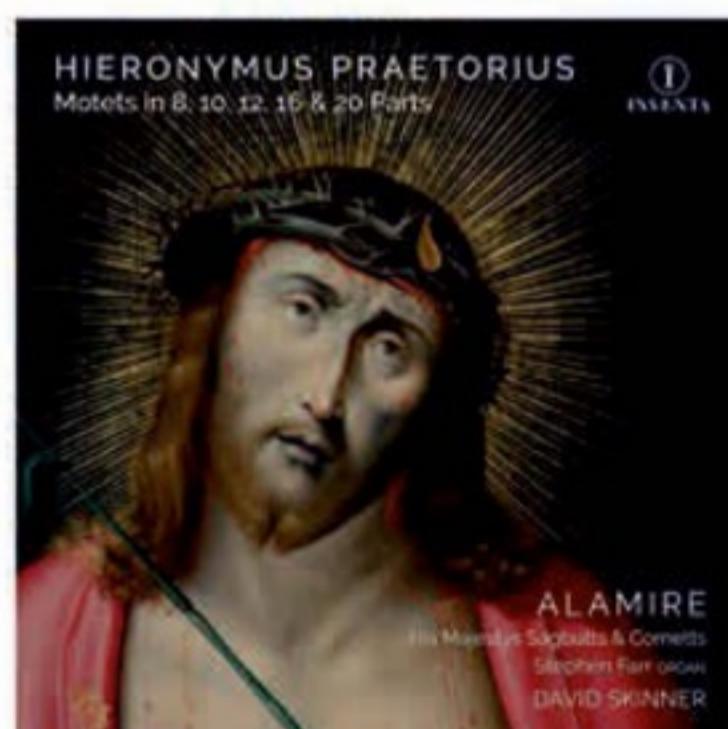


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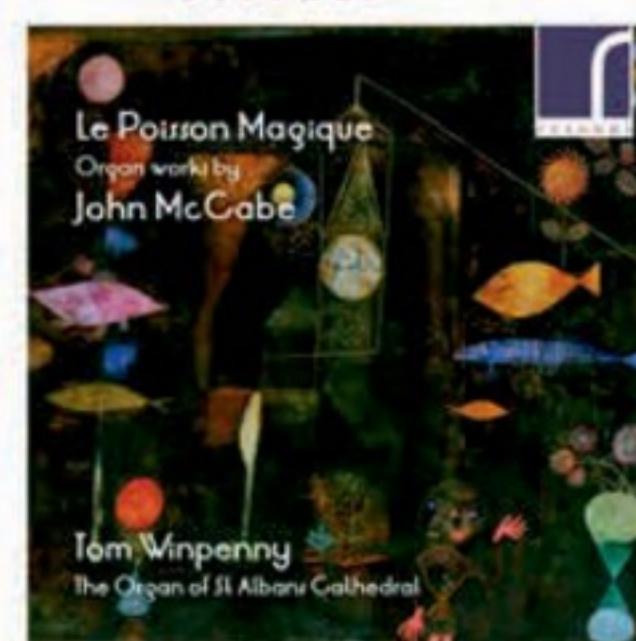


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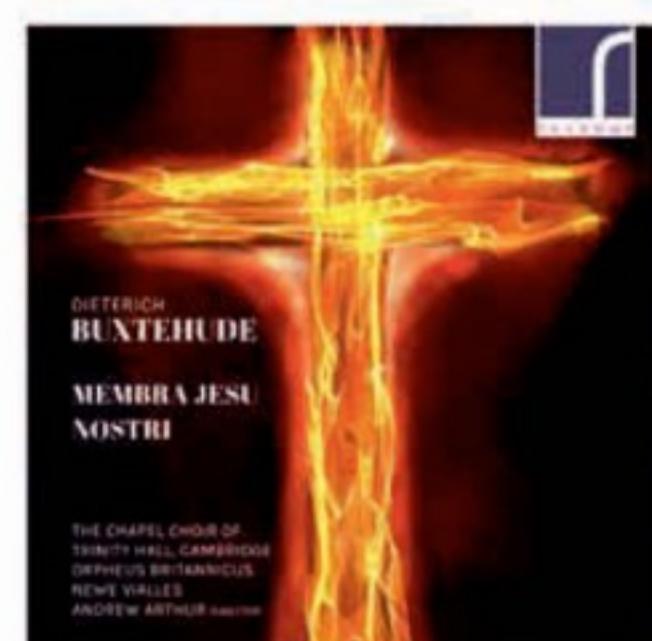
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Orpheus Britannicus; Neue Vialles;
Andrew Arthur (director)

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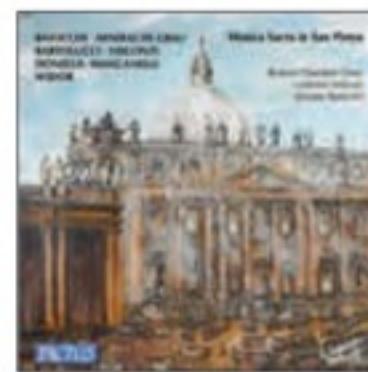
◀ and Christ. Recorded in the Evangelical Protestant Christuskirche in Mainz, the choir and orchestra's home, the performance has a liturgical feel. It is scrupulously faithful to the Bärenreiter edition of the 1736 score – every detail is fastidiously crafted, the soloists are of consistently high quality and the period-instrument orchestra plays beautifully. It has moments of great tenderness, but for me the scenes of conflict need more urgency than this somewhat reserved interpretation provides.

CLARE STEVENS

MUSICA SACRA IN SAN PIETRO

Rossini Chamber Choir, Lorenzo Antinori (org) / Simone Baiocchi (dir)
Tactus TC 940002 [69:18]

★★★



This is a recording of the Eucharist in St Peter's Basilica, Rome, that concluded a National Conference of Composers of Sacred Music, held under the auspices of the Associazione Italiana Santa Cecilia in 2017. Its purpose was to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Domenica Bartolucci (1917-2013), a former conductor of the Choir of the Sistine Chapel, by showcasing music for the Mass written in his lifetime, including his own setting of the main texts. The music was chosen, according to the notes by conductor Simone Baiocchi, for its faithfulness to the spirit of the liturgy, neither distractingly avant-garde nor sentimentally populist. An illuminating disc for anyone with an interest in Catholic liturgy.

CLARE STEVENS ▶



EARLY MUSIC

REBECCA TAVENER ROUNDS UP THE LATEST RELEASES

Italian label Tactus continues to record as much obscure Italian early music as possible with high instrumental standards but a curiously laissez-faire attitude

to vocal quality. For **La Historia del Beato San Martino, 1558** [Tactus TC 520003], the story of St Martin is ebulliently related by a clutch of voices and instruments from La Cappella Musicale di San Giacomo Maggiore, Bologna. One of the voices can sing; the others should stick to playing the colourful collection of instruments which enliven this world premiere recording of largely anonymous 16th-century material. Similarly rare is the **Columbano Psalms for Six Voices** [Brilliant Classics 95839] from La Cappella Musicale della Cattedrale di Vercelli, a vocal octet directed by their priest/maestro in earnestly respectable performances of psalm settings for Vespers in the manner prescribed by the Council of Trent. These world premiere recordings from the composer's own cathedral are sung at A=435, 'Lombard pitch', transposed down to fit the probable organ pitch of the day. A hop across the Mediterranean to Spain reveals a new Iberian ensemble also aspiring to high standards, Coro Victoria, in a programme of assorted motets and Mass sections by **Alonso Lobo** [Brilliant Classics 95789]. Some wonderful solo consort singing impresses, but the resonantly toned choir lacks polish. Nevertheless, I'll be watching out for more from a group with the potential to bring a truly exciting Spanish sound to their rich treasury of polyphony.

The Choir of Girton College, Cambridge, with Historic Brass of the Guildhall School and Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, present **Palestrina Missa Sine nomine à 6** [Toccata Classics TOCC 0516], a fascinating programme including some world premiere recordings, including three delightful motets by Marc'Antonio Ingegneri. Largely using new editions, these are intense, shapely interpretations, with sustained and fervent singing, spiritually informed, we are told,

by a choir tour to the Holy Land. Choral blend has inconsistencies but the emotional intensity never wavers, battling cool acoustics in a recording deserving of a broader soundscape. An even greater recording challenge (evoking memories of Morgan Spurlock) appears in **Supersize Polyphony** [Signum Classics SIGCD560]. It is courageous to record works that are so much more effective when experienced live: among the numerous lovely moments there's a lot of yelling, to messy if lively effect, by voices uneven in technique and style in an insufficiently spacious recording. Armonico Consort join with the Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, for Striggio and Tallis 40-part motets and Striggio's *Missa Ecco si beata giorno* which, with up to 60 voices, crushes the listener into submission, between the sections of which we find not some tastefully selected Gregorian chant but monody by St Hildegard von Bingen - the liner notes are innocent of justification.

Now for secular chamber music: representative of the more adventurous new wave of early music bands, Ratas del Viejo Mundo ('Old World rodents') presents **Ossesso** [Ramee RAM 1808], Italian madrigals of love and affliction. Theirs is a compelling soundworld combining four characterful voices with the lutes of Floris de Rycker, employing reinvention that revivifies, pushing at boundaries of performance practice in a programme ranging across 300 years from Jacopo da Bologna to Gesualdo, obsessing about obsession in this gloriously immediate, impressively lively recording set in indulgently cavernous church acoustics. More conventionally, **Monteverdi Madrigals Book 9** [Naxos 8.555318] showcases the six Italian male voices and seven instrumentalists of Delitiae Musicae, living up to their name in characterisation and story-telling. Depths of sympathy and understanding inform their approach to the text, from extreme tenderness to violent emotional outburst, using new editions by director Marco Longhini. This recording of well-balanced clarity is an admirable finale to their cycle of Monteverdi's complete secular works.

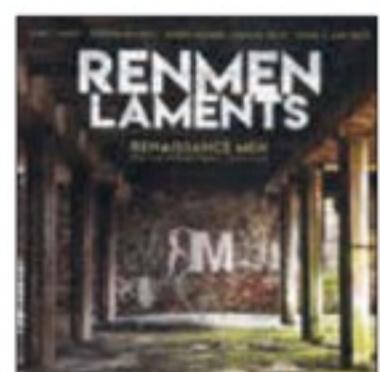
Rebecca Tavener is a singer and director specialising in early and contemporary music. She is founder-director of Canty, Scotland's only professional medieval music group.

◀ RENMEN LAMENTS

Renaissance Men / Eric Christopher Perry (dir)

Navona NV 6210 [47:23]

★★★



They always put together a fascinating programme, the Renaissance Men, and with a name like that, eclecticism can usually be assumed. This brings together material by Daniel Gawthrop, Thomas Tallis, Darius Milhaud, Patricia van Ness

and Pablo Casals, who can't have appeared together on a concert programme or CD before. The singing is strong, accurate, committed and bright (in all the right senses for an album of laments). The Gawthrop piece, *The Settings of Isaiah the Prophet*, is a bit of a revelation, and wisely reserved for last, coming in right after Tallis's *Lamentations of Jeremiah*, which might well be its inspiration.

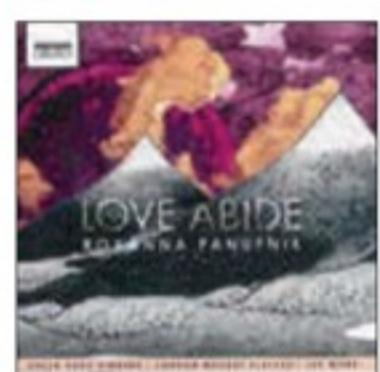
BRIAN MORTON

LOVE ABIDE: ROXANNA PANUFNIK

Voces8, Colla Voce Singers, Exultate Singers, London Mozart Players / Lee Ward (dir)

Signum Classics SIGCD 564 [64:26]

★★★★



Several fine ensembles, soloists and conductors contribute to this collection of works on the theme of love, all of which reflect Roxanna Panufnik's preoccupation with the importance of interfaith understanding in a troubled world.

Stand-out pieces for me are *Zen Love Song*, combining a 15th-century Japanese text with a traditional lullaby, performed by Voces8 and accompanied by Loli Day on a shakuhachi flute; and a Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis in which the Latin texts of the Ave Maria and the Nunc Dimittis, so important to the Roman Catholic tradition, are effectively woven through the English texts used in Anglican worship, performed by the Exultate Singers.

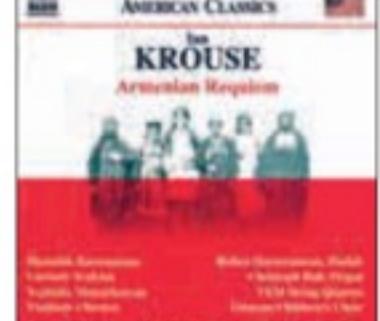
CLARE STEVENS

IAN KROUSE: ARMENIAN REQUIEM, OP.66

Shousik Barsoumian (s), Garineh Avakian (m-s), Yeghishe Manucharyan (t), Vladimir Chernov (bar), Tziatan Children's Choir, Lark Master Singers (Vatsche Barsoumian, chorus master), UCLA Philharmonic (Movses Pogossian, concert master), VEM String Quartet, Ruben Harutyunyan (duduk), Jens Lindemann (tpt), Bobby Rodriguez (tpt), Christoph Bull (org) / Neal Stulberg (dir)

Naxos 8.559846-47 [1:35:19]

★★★★



Judgement of this titanic performance and world premiere recording is obviously secondary to the existence of the work itself, the first large-scale sacred work to memorialise the Armenian massacres of 1916. Krouse has – perhaps following

Benjamin Britten in the *War Requiem* – not strictly followed the liturgical form of the traditional Armenian Mass, but has interspersed poetry, mostly by writers little known in the west, and devices like the offstage trumpets of 'Interlude II: Moon of the

Armenian Tombs'. This clearly was a key moment in the cultural life of the large Armenian diaspora in Los Angeles, and to rate it according to ordinary aesthetic standards is to fall somewhere between cultural appropriation and just missing the point. It's an extraordinary piece, which manages, for all its scale and powerful orchestration, to seem quiet and inward to the point of intimacy. An astonishing achievement.

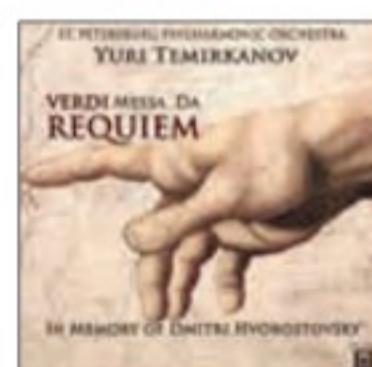
BRIAN MORTON

VERDI: MESSA DA REQUIEM

Dinara Alieva (s), Olesya Petrova (m-s), Francesco Meli (t), Dmitry Berosselskiy (b), Bolshoi Theatre Chorus, St Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra / Yuri Temirkanov (dir)

Delos DE 3563 [1:30:20]

★★★★



This performance and recording is dedicated to the memory of Russian operatic baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky (who died in 2017 at the age of 55) and seems a fittingly grand tribute to a singer prematurely lost. Whatever one thinks of the Verdi Mass – whether in definitional terms – is it a Mass or some kind of 'sacred opera' – or its occasionally OTT elements, it is a remarkable listen, either in a hall or through some suitably robust speakers. The Russian executants seem to play down the operatic elements a little, which is intriguing, and give the piece a more solemnly ritualistic feel than it often gives off. This might not be an automatic first choice for the Verdi collector, but it delivers powerfully and is not without its subtler reinterpretations, particularly in the second half.

BRIAN MORTON

CHORAL MUSIC

BEETHOVEN: MISSA SOLEMNIS

Barry Cooper (ed.)

Bärenreiter BA 9038-90 (vocal score SATB with SATB soli, piano reduction arr. Andrea Campora), £12.00



One of the most celebrated erstwhile musical marketeers was Johann Maelzel, with his drive to promote his prototype metronome. Maelzel patented his device in 1815 and gifted metronomes to the most influential musicians of the day. One of the recipients of Maelzel's Metronome (abbreviated MM) was Beethoven, who was a fan. But Beethoven was always clear that a metronome mark 'can refer to the opening bars only, for sentiment also has its peculiar rhythm'. There are 135 metronome marks in Beethoven's œuvre, though none appears in the *Missa solemnis*, even though it was begun in 1819 and completed in 1823. Originally Beethoven was given a year to compose this large-scale Mass. A date of 9 March 1820 was set for the first performance, when Archduke Rudolph (one of Beethoven's patrons) was to be enthroned as Archbishop of Olmütz. Beethoven prepared himself thoroughly for

the task and initially sketched long and hard; but in the event he missed his deadline by three years – there's hope for us all.

It's perhaps surprising that Bärenreiter hasn't previously published Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*, not least because Beethoven himself described his Mass in D as 'my greatest work' (although at that point Beethoven hadn't yet completed the Ninth Symphony). But here it is now, just in time for the run-up to next year's Beethoven anniversary (250th of his birth, if you haven't been concentrating). Bärenreiter's *Missa solemnis* arrives in a truly splendid new edition by Professor Barry Cooper of the University of Manchester, and there are some surprises. In Cooper's edition the choir sings right from the beginning of the Sanctus, rather than from 'pleni sunt coeli', or the 'Osanna', or even from 'in

nomine' within the Benedictus, depending on which source you've previously favoured. On the other hand, the soloists get to sing along with more of the Credo than they might previously have done. As ever, Bärenreiter's production and editorial values are out of the top drawer. Marginally more expensive than its most obvious competitor, this knocks the spots off its rival for authority and legibility. And the hidden gem is the inclusion of Beethoven's harmonisation of the *Tantum ergo* plainchant, which Beethoven fashioned at the same time that he was working on the *Missa solemnis*. *Tantum ergo* appears as the last two pages of the vocal score and acts as a palate-cleansing limoncello at the end of a five-course banquet.

JEREMY SUMMERLY ▶



CHORAL SELECTION

A MASS BY BOSSI, KUHNAU MOTETS, AND ANTHEMS BY JUDITH WEIR AND CECILIA McDOWALL

Now – a further entry in the catalogue of good pieces of music by composers whom time forgot. Marco Enrico Bossi was a highly respected Italian musician of the late 19th/early 20th century. When writing choral liturgical music, he supported the principles of the Cecilian movement, a Europe-wide fraternity which took many of the elements of renaissance music as their ideal: Palestrina was their hero. In 1892 he wrote half of the movements of a memorial Mass for the anniversary of the death of King Vittorio Emanuele II; his friend and fellow composer Tebaldini wrote the other sections. At some point around the turn of the century Bossi took up the work again, produced his own music to replace Tebaldini's, provided an *ad libitum* accompaniment for organ or harmonium (which merely supports the vocal lines) and in this form, the **Missa Pro Defunctis** op.83 [SATB & org. or harmonium (ad lib); Carus Verlag full score 27.304/00 €30.00, **choral score** 27.304/05 €10.95, organ 27.304/49 €17.95] was first performed in 1906. Within the constraints of the (essentially) a cappella SATB layout, Bossi provides considerable variety of rhythm, texture, mood and tempo. (I had to consult my handbook of Italian musical terms for some of his instructions.) The work's usefulness liturgically is obvious, but it could also be used in concert, perhaps spread over the entire recital with other music between sections – the whole Requiem lasts about 35 minutes.

If J.S. Bach's motets are miracles of choral construction, it is reasonable to suppose that those by his immediate predecessor at St Thomas's, Leipzig, might at least be worth a look. **Drei Motetten** by Johann Kuhnau [Mixed choir; Breitkopf & Hartel ChB 5343, €9.52] could also be used in church and in concert. All are in five parts, rather than four. The first motet, which divides the tenors, is strophic, and unremarkable. The next two are really interesting, with divided soprano parts. There is the usual mixture

of duple- and triple-time sections, homophony and counterpoint; and Kuhnau shows a real feeling for the texts he is setting, with effective chromaticism in the doleful 'Tristis est anima mea'. As a bonus, there is a fourth motet by an anonymous hand which is clearly of similar date and style. These pieces are offered without a separate continuo part, and while it is certainly possible to perform all of them completely unaccompanied, I'm sure Kuhnau would have expected a light reinforcement of the voices on the organ. Experienced continuo players will have no trouble providing this from the vocal bass line.

Commissioned to commemorate the anniversary of the end of the first world war, Judith Weir's anthem **The True Light** [SATB & org; Chester Music CH88033, £3.50] is the work of a composer at the top of her game. A feature of this piece is the organ part, which here accompanies, there solos, but everywhere is in conversation with the choir. The text features three verses of a thanksgiving psalm in the middle, bounded by words from the First Epistle of John – 'the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.' This five-minute work will be a challenge to all participants – including the conductor if there is distance between organ and choir – but any performance will be a rewarding experience for performers and audience.

I am also very taken by Cecilia McDowall's **Ash Wednesday** [SATB & org; Oxford University Press 9780193524200, £2.95]. The composer has set words by Christina Rossetti which are somewhat reminiscent of John Donne's poem 'A Hymne to God the Father'. The musical language is of no great difficulty, and strong but economical structure is achieved by small musical cells which are allowed to grow through the piece. I am reminded of Herbert Howells's harmonic language in the more up-tempo central section. Here again the organist plays a major role in a piece suitable for any penitential occasion.

After an early career as a freelance choral director and counter-tenor, Jeremy Jackman was a member of the King's Singers for ten years. In 1990 he resumed a career in conducting and leading workshops. He is currently musical director of the English Baroque Choir, and the Cecilian Singers in Leicester. www.jeremyjackman.co.uk

BOOKS

◀ THE MUSIC OF JAMES MACMILLAN

Phillip A. Cooke

Boydell Press ISBN 9781783273706, h/b, 317 pp. incl. list of works, bibliography and index, 4 b/w illustrations, 74 line illustrations, £30.00



This summer Sir James MacMillan turns 60. One of the UK's most successful contemporary composers, this prolific figure is closely identified with his Scottish nationality, his Roman Catholic faith and his social conscience – aspects of what makes MacMillan tick that are reflected fully in his output. And what a wide-ranging and consistent output it is! Accomplished in virtually every available genre, MacMillan has notably enriched the orchestral, choral and operatic fields. As the *Guardian* said of him, he is 'a composer so confident of his own musical language that he makes it instantly communicative to his listeners.'

As Phillip A. Cooke admits, it can be difficult writing about a living composer, who could quite easily have another quarter of a century of musical creativity ahead of him. And being first in the field comes with its own issues. Yet there are advantages too: Cooke has benefited from access to the composer, though one suspects MacMillan has preserved a respectable distance from influencing Cooke's text.

Cooke is shrewd in being selective in what he discusses from MacMillan's vast output (over 250 individual items). He focuses on what are generally regarded as the composer's most significant pieces. For example, he pays close attention to *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* (the work that first brought MacMillan to wider attention), *Veni, Veni Emmanuel* (effectively a percussion concerto for Evelyn Glennie) and the *Seven Last Words from the Cross*, to name but three. More recent works, such as the Symphony no.4 and *Stabat Mater* – the latter had a powerful effect on its first audiences – are mentioned but do not receive discussion from Cooke; perhaps they came too late for his text and will surely feature 10 or 15 years hence in a revised, updated edition. But the reader can be confident that Cooke has focused on all the significant works that reveal the development of MacMillan's art.

Cooke is an authoritative companion as the reader makes his chronological route through MacMillan's development as a composer. The author is in full command of his material and has a clear and precise prose style. His musical analysis is aided by the judicious inclusion of music examples, which will satisfy the specialist reader but won't leave the non-specialist yet musically literate enthusiast floundering. He relates most of his musical discussion of MacMillan's œuvre to the composer's life, beliefs and aesthetics, an approach that seems ideal for a composer who reflects so much of the contemporary world and the human condition. Indeed, in this admirable volume, Cooke uncovers much of what it means to be a classical composer in the 21st century.

PHILIP REED

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ENCOUNTERS

CARRIS JONES, ALTO VICAR CHORAL, ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL



GRAHAM LACDAO/ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

“I’m marking my second anniversary at St Paul’s – a truly amazing two years. At first I wasn’t sure what to expect. Having been a choral scholar, I knew what Evensong entailed and was confident in my ability to do the job; but I had not been a chorister as a child – and anyway that would have been difficult for a girl in the early 1990s – so the whole cathedral set-up and the rhythm of day-to-day services took some getting used to. Now, however, I feel completely at home here.

As the only woman in the choir, I’m tremendously supported by Andrew Carwood [director of music] and my counter-tenor colleagues, so I feel enormously valued. Being the trailblazer is a pressure, but it’s pressure I feel quite honoured to have; I think that I represent much more than just myself. I feel it’s my duty to keep pushing for more opportunities for women in choirs and helping to make those conversations happen.

I’ve had a steady trickle of women approaching me for advice on whether they should audition at other cathedrals

and I really encourage them, as I can’t think of any work environment that isn’t improved by greater diversity; but it is important that selection is made on the basis of merit. When I auditioned, I firmly believed that St Paul’s wasn’t looking just to appoint a woman but to find the best person for the role.

London is really behind in this kind of representation; there are increasing opportunities for women and girls in cathedrals away from the capital. This year the annual thanksgiving service for the Clergy Support Trust was sung by St Paul’s with Coventry and Canterbury, and I was so happy to see two women in the Coventry back row.

In a way, though, women in the back row is a bit of a red herring – the real issue is girls in the *front* row. Looking at that is fraught, with people’s totally understandable attachment to the notion of a boys’ choir, but I am hoping it will gather momentum and lead to a place where neither boys nor girls are disenfranchised. I’m not arguing that boys should have fewer opportunities,

just that girls should have the same, too.

What girls can add to the musical life of the church is wonderful: there is huge, untapped potential there. Every place has a different set of obstacles to navigate and it’s important that they are given fair consideration, but boys have an advantage in the choral world. They have the confidence of learning the repertoire early, coupled with sight-reading experience; there is a professionalism expected of them. It makes me sad that girls don’t always have the same opportunity.

I sang my first Anglican psalm aged 18. I don’t have this hinterland of church experience but it hasn’t held me back, and I would never suggest to anyone that they should feel discouraged because they have not had that experience.

I love the rhythm of the church’s year and the daily round of services. I can be having the most difficult day imaginable with two children under five at home, but singing Evensong with just 23 minutes of rehearsal really concentrates the mind. You have to be in the moment, you can’t be worrying about whether your son has remembered to take his hat to school.

My husband, Oliver Hunt, is a bass lay clerk at St George’s Chapel, Windsor Castle [they met at Cambridge and were founder members of Stile Antico]. We live in one of the choir houses just behind the chapel. He has a 22-second commute to work, whereas I spend a lot of time on the train. My daughter was just four months old when I sang my first service at St Paul’s. Oliver had her in a sling and walked her around the nave while we sang. We couldn’t do any of this without my wonderful mother-in-law, who helps with the children, and a part-time nanny. I’m still doing some oratorio and recital work and concerts with Sonoro and the Gabrieli Consort, but my job at St Paul’s enables me to have a routine while my children are small – for which I am profoundly grateful. ■

Carris Jones was in conversation with Stephen Pritchard.

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